N. P. Harrington .75

Definition of faith: P. 233

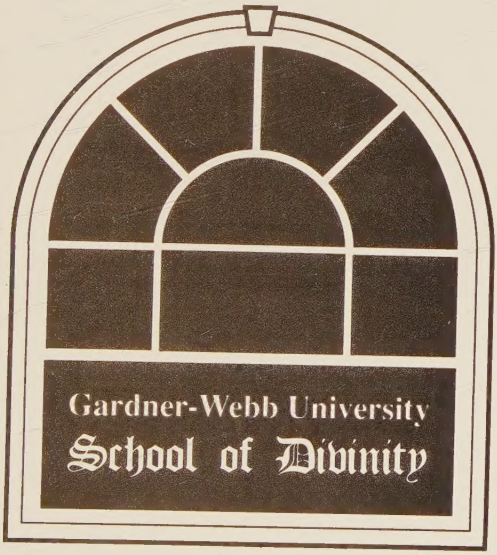
Dover Memorial Library
Gardner-Webb University
P.O. Box 836
Boiling Springs, N.C. 28017

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/jesusinexperienc0000trgl_k1a8

JESUS IN THE EXPERIENCE OF MEN

School of Divinity



This book donated
by

NOLAN P. HOWINGTON

JESUS IN THE EXPERIENCE OF MEN

T. R. GLOVER

Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Public Orator in the University. Author of "The Jesus of History"

ASSOCIATION PRESS
NEW YORK: 347 MADISON AVENUE
1923

BR
125
.G545
1921
C. 2

COPYRIGHT, 1921, BY
T. R. GLOVER

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

One of the parables of Jesus turns on the ferment of leaven in a mass of meal—a vivid forecast of his own effect on the minds of men. He found a world full of established ideas, heirlooms of a great and progressive past, and the immediate effect of his coming was a struggle between inheritance and experience. "It was said to them of old time; but I say unto you." The minds of most of us are like palimpsests written over and over again; here the latest notion stands out in the newest script, but between the letters are to be found traces of ideas much older, obliterated but legible; there the old is almost untouched, but the closer observer finds hints of a "later hand." Every great thinker sets men rewriting these palimpsests, and it is long before it is completely achieved; and often by that time a new story is being superimposed on the corrected page. Jesus had the same material to work upon as every great teacher, and his work was done in the same way, on the same terms, and with the same result in the clash of old and new. He has reacted on mankind, as we all know; he has transformed their ideas, blotted out old preconceptions and convictions, and through experience brought men to a new set of principles; but the process has been long and slow.

It is not as if men had really known at first what he meant and what his principles involved or, indeed, guessed how much his personality was to signify. It is easy to talk of his disciples taking the Christian message to the world; but when we begin to consider what this meant,

the task which they undertook is progressively realized to be of the hardest. A man has an entirely new experience, and he wishes to tell other men of it, but in what language? If he uses their language, it is inadequate for the new light and joy he has found; if he uses his own, recreated by the experience, it will be unintelligible. The dilemma is real but not final. One mind goes out to meet another; the listener can make nothing of the message, but he sees that there is something to be told; the bearing, the earnestness, the character of the messenger compel attention, and gradually the story is shared. But it is changed in being communicated. A poet has an inspiration; but if he is a great poet and writes great poetry, the eventual poem may be very different from the initial inspiration, even when it is full of it and expresses it—"like, but oh! how different!" The early Christian, in telling his story to the world, had to translate it; and translation, as all bred on Greek verse composition know, is a discipline in understanding; it means long and hard wrestling with the original, till it yields its real meaning. When the early Christian began to translate the story of Jesus into Greek (to say nothing of Latin, Syriac, or Armenian), he found out the gaps in his knowledge of the Greek vernacular and in his knowledge of Jesus; and by the time he had got his message into the new speech, his experience of Jesus was a larger one, and he had to tell of a greater Christ than he had expected. The leaven had done more than it seemed to be doing.

In one region and another of experience humanity has experimented with Jesus, constantly with new and unexpected results; it has explored him with anxiety; it has enjoyed him; and by exploring and enjoying him it has found more and more in him, and it has grown in the process.

Our task in this volume is primarily historical. We have to watch the Christian apostle and the Christian community brought face to face with new issues, intellectual, spiritual, and social, and doing their best to adjust old and new, often with a belief in the permanence of the old which experience does not sustain, frequently with a good deal of fear which proves not warranted. The ancient world had had a long religious experience; and if some of its standard ideas were as yet insufficiently examined, some of its gains were real and permanent. The Christian Gospel had to be re-examined in connection with them all.

The chief questions in religion for that ancient world were these:—Is God many or one? Is he just? Can man have peace with God and be sure of it? Is man's own personality secure, and for how long? We shall in turn have to discuss these questions and the older answers to them; to review the belief in spirits, that heirloom from animistic times, the philosophic foundation of polytheism; the problem of justice which haunts Greek thinkers from Theognis to Plato and beyond, and is the inspiring motive of Jewish apocalyptic; the conception of religion as safety, and of sacrifice as the supreme mode of religion, the assurance of God's acceptance. As all these ideas had been perpetually readjusted to growing experience of the nature of morality, a fuller discussion of sin and its forgiveness will properly follow, and with it a survey of the central question of the nature of God, and then of the problem of personal immortality, which occupied antiquity more and more, and at every stage depended on the conception of God dominant in the day. Lastly in this connection we must consider the attempt made, upon the background of these beliefs and of others, to explain the place of Christ in the universe which he was remodeling.

The second part of the book will deal more directly with the Christian society. There we shall have to review the efforts of the Church as it wrestles with its own problems of existence and effectiveness, as an institution. The personal relations which its members generally maintained with their Founder have been at every period decisive for the character of the Church at large; and we must make some endeavor to determine these relations, particularly when and where they are most intense and most controlling.

Finally, there are the broader effects of the ideas of Jesus upon human progress and the human spirit at large—sometimes the result of conscious and deliberate application of his principles to the affairs of men, perhaps as often the unconscious and unrecognized but none the less real outcome of men's affection for him.

Of course, as Aristotle said of his own *Ethics*, all this will be attempted "in outline and not in detail." A further difficulty will be that in all such study we have to isolate and to analyze ideas which were operative together and acted and reacted on one another; but that also is inevitable unless the reader will tolerate some repetition among the chapters. Finally, writer and reader here will have different rôles; the writer is to be the historian merely; it is for the reader to pass upon the evidence submitted and to be the theologian. In any case the work, if properly done by both writer and reader, should result in a new sense of the significance of Jesus in the experience of men.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	v
I.	THE WAR WITH THE DAEMONS	1
II.	THE PROBLEM OF DIVINE JUSTICE	18
III.	SAVIOURS AND SALVATION	35
IV.	THE LAMB OF GOD	52
V.	THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN	71
VI.	THE REVELATION OF GOD	92
VII.	IMMORTALITY	113
VIII.	ALPHA AND OMEGA	132
IX.	THE CHURCH COMPROMISING	147
X.	THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS	169
XI.	THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS	182
XII.	THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT	196
XIII.	THE HUMANIZING OF LIFE	211
XIV.	THE RECONCILIATION OF FREEDOM AND RELIGION	231

CHAPTER I

THE WAR WITH THE DAEMONS

I

A chance phrase will sometimes open a man's mind to us and show us a series of thoughts and ideas, of preconceptions and presuppositions, which surprise us. We have known him, intimately, too; and behind all lay this! It is with some such feeling that we find a whole world of strange background to the familiar thinking of St. Paul. He speaks of the wisdom of God, and then he adds, "which none of the princes of this world knew; for, had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (I Cor. 2: 8). It was not of Pontius Pilate and Herod that Paul was speaking, but of beings far more awful and far more powerful—thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, as he calls them elsewhere, "the world-rulers of this darkness," and at their head is "the prince of the power of the air."[1]

There had grown up in Jewish thought a great scheme of things which embodied a spirit world at war with God. Satan appears in the Old Testament, first of all as an accuser, and then as a maker of mischief. In the period between the main body of the Old Testament and the beginnings of the New, he had gained a greater prominence in men's thoughts and was now lord of the angels that fell, the great enemy of God,[2] "the Black

[1] See II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 3:2; Eph. 6:12; Col. 2:30; Gal. 4:3, 9. For principalities and powers and thrones, cf. II Enoch (Secrets) 20:1.

[2] Cf. Testament of Dan 5, "For I read in a book of Enoch the just, that the ruler of them is Satan." Cf. II Enoch (Secrets) 18:3. In I Enoch 65:6, the Satans appear in the plural.

One"[3]. God, with his purposes, and the forces that stand with him, is confronted by powers of evil, not scattered and desultory, but organized, ruled, and guided, well drilled, well led, and not unaware of God's designs. Again and again, through traitors in God's Kingdom, they got wind of the plans of God[4] and anticipated them, defeated them where they could, and fought a war of cunning and skill against God.[5]

The Jews did not stand alone in this conception of the spirit world. For the primitive peoples of today and for some who are not so primitive, the whole universe is full of daemon powers, more real than we can imagine. In an Indian temple I have seen women undergoing the process of having devils driven out of them. I have seen men of education bowing in these temples to avert the anger of such spirits. To the stranger from the West, with his modern science, they are nothing. To the ancient world they were more real than the men and women in the streets. All the daemons, devils, imps, and bogeys of popular belief, and all the gods of all the cults and all the religions were being reduced to one system; all were necessary in an orderly Cosmos. The later Greek philosophers explained through daemons the origin of evil, all the mystery and all the trouble of the world; and also the otherwise inexplicable gulf between the ultimate but unknowable One God and man. Gods lived beyond the atmosphere; daemons in the air; man on earth. So there was this daemon world proven; proven by all sickness and sin; proven by long belief, by the old religions; proven by the agreement of all mankind; proven by the assent of the best and most catholic of philosophic

[3] Barnabas 4:11.

[4] Cf. Enoch 16:3; not all the mysteries were known to the Watchers who fell.

[5] Cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, p. 121; *St. Paul and the Last Things*, pp. 324, 325; Clemen, *Primitive Christianity and Non-Jewish Sources*, pp. 83, 110.

thinkers. The Jew and the Christian were monotheists, but they too believed in the existence of daemons; they were face to face with this awful reality of the daemon world at war with God. Paul, it is quite clear, shared that belief, though he did not give to it the importance that other men gave.

Into that war, however, according to Paul, came a new force—the son of God, the Lord of Glory.[6] He battled with the powers of evil, and the battle went strangely, and they trapped him. Pilate and Herod were mere tools in the hands of these daemon powers, and they captured the Son of God. They crucified the Lord of Glory, and inflicted on God the most awful disaster that could be conceived. Then it turned out, says Paul, that, so far from defeating God's purposes, with all their skill and all their cunning, they had only played into the hands of God. For the defeat of Christ on the cross led to the Resurrection, to the triumph of God over the daemon powers, to captor made captive, death conquered, mankind set free; and all the glorious promises of spiritual liberty and of peace with God which the Christian world knows, and in which it rejoices.

In *Paradise Lost* we have this story in its most glorious form, but few of us accept it as history. All this dim world has passed from our minds; this tale of war in the spirit sphere is for us the merest mythology—"as much a dream as Milton's hierarchies," wrote John Keats.[7] Yet for St. Paul's contemporaries the permanence of the daemons was better assured than that of the Lord of Glory; their part and place in the world was proved and accepted, his was a doubtful Jewish assertion.[8]

[6] The Lord of Glory is a name of God in I Enoch.

[7] Keats, Letter to Reynolds, August 25, 1819.

[8] Celsus, about A.D. 178, ridiculed this war of Satan with God; it was not "holy" to suggest that the greatest God had a rival; it was all a misunderstanding (quite in the Christian style) of Heraclitus' doctrine of strife. Celsus, however, accepted belief in daemons as natural and right.

Two problems here confront the historian. He has to explain how this phantasmagoria disappeared, and why, if this legend of war was the real Christian faith, or some vital part of it, the Lord of Glory has not gone with the rest of the *dramatis personae*. The identification of the Lord of Glory with the carpenter of Nazareth was surely the keystone of the Christian faith. If the one is dismissed as a figure in a fairy tale, what significance is left to the other? If we abandon Paul's "mythology" or turn it into "symbol," which is a politer way of doing the same thing, do we not, by this process of discarding, rob the Christian tradition and the Christian faith of its distinctive note and its real value?

If the affirmation of the writer to the Hebrews is to stand, "Jesus Christ, yesterday and today the same, and forever"; if the Church is to maintain that he has any permanence; we shall have to show what has been his real place in human experience, and to prove that the teaching of the Church about its Master rests not on abstract theory or mythology, but has foundations in what men have actually experienced of him. We shall have to treat such evidence as the Christian generations give us, exactly as we do all historical evidence—with the same sympathy, with the same caution, applying the same canons of judgment, using the same habits of doubt, looking in the same spirit of truthfulness for alternative explanations, careful always to limit our statements severely by our real knowledge.

The modern psychologist has, we may say, settled a great many questions suggested by the demonology of the past. He treats visions and voices, dual personality, conversion, and so forth, in a way foreign altogether to Paul's contemporaries, as to modern Roman Catholic, to Hindu and animist; and his conclusions so far appeal to the best trained minds as more satisfactory than the

ancient explanations. Will he go further and dispose of our religious experience as he has done of the long-established belief in daemons, in visions and theophanies? After all, the worst he can really do is to drive us to a closer study of fact, and our best friends can do us no better service. If he has disposed of the daemons and demigods, by whom the ancient thinker used to explain the existence of evil in the world, he has achieved a great stroke for mankind, it is true, in ridding men of the most paralyzing terrors it has known; but he has neither eliminated evil from the world we know, nor explained its presence there. A great dissension in Nature remains, however we express it or explain it. Carlyle used to worry over Emerson's inability to see the hand of the devil in human life. We know Carlyle's vocabulary and we interpret it; is not (in passing) the same procedure fair in reading the New Testament and the Christian Fathers? What lies behind their vocabulary? What facts of experience do their psychology and their demonology indicate? An explanation implies an experience. Pain is no less uncomfortable physically if we refuse the view that a daemon causes it, though, of course, a bacillus may perhaps be more easily treated. There remains just as much reality as before about the historical Jesus, and about the living and present Christ, whether we accept or reject the theories which the Church has spun on the subject; and the same applies to the theories of the Church's critics. Let us get to history.

II

After quoting the evidence of St. Paul for the widespread belief in daemons, it may seem a contradiction to suggest that in the New Testament the daemons are already beginning to recede from the first line of

interest; yet it is true. The writers of the Gospels refer all sorts of diseases to daemon-possession, as their contemporaries did. They stood with their neighbors in psychology, as was natural, and they shared their opinions in medicine. But while they keep the old language and the old beliefs, they are in possession of a principle which makes these of less consequence. For them the daemons and gods of polytheism are no longer very interesting. This is doubly clear. Paul puts it quite explicitly that they are defeated and are "coming to naught"; and the chief interest of the early Christian was manifestly in Jesus. The pagan gods were quickly disposed of; they were the angels that fell—mere daemons like the rest. But it was a longer time before the daemons, and their milder but legitimate descendants, the fairies, were definitely expelled for ever from the sphere of existence; but it was achieved, and by the New Testament principle of concentrating emphasis on Jesus Christ.

Thus Tatian, in the second century, proclaims with joy that "instead of daemons that deceive we have learnt one Master who deceiveth not." A modern Japanese, Uchimura, struck the same note; it was joyful news, "one God and not eight million." Tatian found it an attraction in Christianity that it is "monarchic" and "sets man free from ten thousand tyrants." Modern scholars are only beginning to realize the burden laid on the human mind by astrology and kindred impostures that came from the East, and with a jargon of philosophy and religion imposed themselves on the Roman world. Tatian knew it well enough and renounced the Greeks and their philosophy.[9] Philosophy had, in fact, by its surrender to polytheism and popular belief in daemons, strengthened their hold on men. The Gospel

[9] See Tatian, cc. 9, 16, 17.

did not in so many words deny their existence, but first degraded them and broke their hold, and at last annihilated them. By so doing it took terror out of men's souls, it made obscene and cruel rites needless, and greatly purified and sweetened life.

It is, however, important to note that there was a struggle. The Gospel could be made infinitely more palatable to many minds by bringing it into line with other religions, by blending with it religious and philosophical principles on which they rested, but which were vitally opposed to Christian history and Christian ideals. Such combinations appeared to clear up real philosophical difficulties and left men in a congenial atmosphere of magic and daemonic agencies. It does an historian's heart good to see the swinging blows with which Ignatius hammers a contemporary theory (*c.* A. D. 110) that made Jesus into a "daemon without a body." It is worth remembering that the Church always held to the real humanity of Christ; it was left for the heresies to spin endless genealogies of figments, metaphors, essences, and daemons. To some minds fancy always seems more able than truth to fire the imagination. Today it is hard for the Western thinker to make anything at all of the fragments of Gnostic theology and demonology that have come down to us, or to understand how anybody could ever have been interested in them. This is in itself an indication of what the absorbing interest in Jesus has done; and when one grasps that it stands between us and systems like the many forms of modern Hinduism and theosophy, one realizes anew the value of the historical Jesus.

At times it might seem as if the early Christian, like converts from heathenism today, really used the Gospel as a sort of super-magic. He employed "the Name that is above every name" to expel devils; and from an ex-

perience of my own in India I can understand why he did.[10] But that was by the way. What made that name of value was the Man who bore it, and the supreme interest of his character and story, his cross and resurrection, and yet more his teaching upon God and the intimate relation with God which was at last the only way of explaining him. If Jesus embodied God, if "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," if God was essentially like Jesus, then obviously, however real they might be, the daemons were irrelevant. As the daemon-world was at best a theory to explain phenomena possibly susceptible of other explanations, when Jesus made it irrelevant it ceased to be of interest and it died. This is shortening the story but not changing its meaning. If throughout the Middle Ages and even after the Reformation men believed in daemons and witches, as they did, the liberation of the human mind, which, as we shall see in a later chapter, belongs to the work of Christ, steadily drove the superstition into the background where it gradually died. Jesus is allied with the powers of the mind, and his Gospel naturally militates against "imaginations and every high thing that thrusts itself up," as Paul said.

III

That Jesus was historical differentiates him at once from the daemon "Rulers of the World" and their hosts. They were creatures of the fancy; and he was, in our ordinary sense of the word, real. They depended on a theory or a series of theories, and their dispositions and natures, when they had any, were mere matters of legend and fairy tale; but there was nothing authoritative,

[10] The most splendid illustration of this is the "Breastplate of Patrick," which in Mrs. Alexander's verse is in the *English Hymnal.* The original and a prose translation are in Whitley Stokes's *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick,* Vol. I, p. 49.

nothing final, about them. Indeed there was nothing to begin on, such as a real person offers. A character guaranteed by history is something definite to work upon, however multiple it may be. It is possible to spend oneself with profit in the study of a real man; but if a daemon or a fairy has any lineaments at all, they are borrowed; and the peacock's feathers are more interesting on the peacock than on the jackdaw, especially when the jackdaw itself is a fable.

It was, as we have seen, an immense gain that Jesus was objective, that one could say of him, "This befel him and that definitely did not." The value of this will be brought out by even a very short investigation of Plutarch's method of handling legend or a little talk with a Hindu defending Hinduism. On the one side there is nothing but a series of dissolving views; with Jesus you are on the rock at once and have positive knowledge. To the troubled in heart it was intense relief to turn to a real figure with a real experience and no "perhaps" underlying all. But he is more than historically real; he is real in a deeper sense.

The first three gospels give records of a peculiar intimacy about his life, his character, his mind and personality. They yield a surprising amount of detail, vivid, various, and true. He can be known well, for while his sayings are often perplexing and stimulating, as he meant them to be, his meaning, his general drift, his fundamental ideas are extraordinarily clear. He has a reality, an intensity, that makes other men look beggarly in their outfit, starved in nature and parochial.

Here is a man of genius going quite beyond everyone else we know of that kind; a man of wide range in experience, of intuition, of acumen and instinct. He knows what his experience means and he does not miss it. He sees and feels things with an intensity that we do not

reach. It is of this type that our greatest teachers are in every sphere. The tourist, for instance, sees a waterfall, a rock so many feet high with water coming over; he looks at it, and then takes a newspaper from his pocket till it is time to go home. Wordsworth sees more and realizes he is face to face with a great storehouse of experience:

> "The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion."

The sound of it rang in his ears; the sight of it stayed with him, the color, the gleam, the beauty; he knew they would, and was (so to speak) too busy to waste anything in momentary enjoyment. Jesus, we can guess, felt Nature—experienced Nature—in a way very similar.

Men miss a great deal of their experience; but he is clearer-headed than we are. He sees things, grasps things and realizes them. To take a crucial case, already referred to, he realized pain. When men drew the great spiritual teachers of that day, they left out any suggestion of their being amenable to pain when they could, and made them impassive. Jesus' followers drew him on the cross. Men have always felt, as they got into touch with Jesus, that here is a man who knows where the problems hurt. Why does the widow lose her son? He had lived with a widow and her children, and worked for her day in and day out, and from her he learnt a tenderness for all women and all widows. What is the meaning of that pain? Or the pain of a prodigal son? That, too, he has drawn in his parables. He felt it and he knew it. The problem bore on him and burdened him and took him to the cross. What, again, is the meaning of the devilish hardness of the human heart? What indeed? Four years of war have revealed ugly streaks in us; we fancied they were not there; but he knew. Here,

then, was a man who had been bruised and agonized by the problems that trouble us. He had to wrestle with these things. He would have no anodyne. He drank the cup without the anesthetic. He went through it all till he knew the points that trouble men and women. He knew exactly where the difficulty comes; and he has found peace. Matthew Arnold wrote a good deal of theology which is obsolete, but there are certain things which he wrote which rise higher than much modern criticism. "Jesus Christ," he said, "was above his reporters"; but he said a greater thing still. "Jesus bases himself always on experience, and never on theory"; and that is a great truth.

Genius differs from our common endowment perhaps most in this that it seizes the fact with meaning; and, that once achieved, all the rest fall into lucidity. For Jesus experience was not sheer sickening pain, for he understood what to do with it. He penetrated farther into it than we do. This again is the mark of the genius, of the poet. Jesus had a hold of the centrality of God in experience in a way that still surprises us. Call it genius, insight, intuition—or use the speech of the Church and say Word, Essence, *Homoousios*—the fact we are all trying to express is the intense hold that Jesus has of the Real; he *knows*, where others are guessing, and guessing badly.[11]

Our age is not the first to discover the value to ordinary people of a great man. The names of Socrates and Zeno haunt the discourses of that day. They and not the daemons were the moral examples, a significant fact. "Place before yourself what Socrates or Zeno would have done in such circumstances," said Epictetus.[12] "Though you are not yet a Socrates, you ought to live as one who

[11] See p. 110.
[12] *Manual*, 33.

wishes to be a Socrates."[13] "Go away to Socrates and see him . . . and think what a victory he felt he won over himself."[14] Others gave similar advice; "Do everything as if Epictetus saw."[15] And among Romans Cato and Laelius were recommended. "We ought to choose some good man," writes Seneca, "and always have him before our eyes that we may live as if he watched us, and do everything as if he saw."[16] So old and so natural is the use men make of other men who have been victorious in life; so much more profitable is history than theory.

The great man is felt not to be an accident, or (to use a biological term) a "sport," but to be a real and relevant manifestation of what human nature is. What is possible for one can be possible under conditions for another; and then the question rises about the conditions, a question difficult enough but soluble somehow, men feel. And man, by nature built to be moral and to be religious, built to seek for truth, is driven by his experience of the "great Man" to look more deeply into human nature and into its relations with the spiritual environment, with God. In epitome, all real progress in religion has been achieved by men who would face the facts and divined which facts to face; by men who realized that victory in the sphere of mind and character is the best evidence as to ultimate reality; or, simply, by men who had good fathers and friends and knew it, and put them definitely above doubtfully moral gods and daemons, and slowly rethought their ideas of God and rebuilt their religious systems on the impulse of their experience of human goodness.[17] It is not necessary here, nor possible, to survey through nineteen

[13] *Manual*, 50.
[14] *Discourses*, II, 18, 22.
[15] Seneca, *Ep.* 25:5.
[16] *Ep.* 11:8.
[17] The last clause epitomizes a good deal of the progress in religion made by Greece before Plato.

centuries how men's experience of Jesus has driven them into fresh thought on God and man. But to realize how far ahead of religions based on daemon-theories and old legends Christianity is, some close study in detail of its records and its contrasts is invaluable.

To recapitulate, before we pass on, the victory of Jesus has only been slowly won. Tradition, association, esthetics, sheer conservatism, and terror have all played their part in retarding it. There *must* be daemons, men felt, or all the world would not say so; what "everybody" says, must be true—paraphrasing Stoic doctrine of the consensus of mankind. But experience of Jesus was a great corrective. He was very difficult to explain; the reconciliation of what he said with the teaching of priest and philosopher and gossip was very hard; but in the end fact conquers. There he was, historical, true, intelligent of his experience, a pioneer in fact and an interpreter; and there he is still.

IV

It is difficult to recall an instance of a great personality putting a new truth before the world and passing away from the life of mankind before the new lesson was learnt to the very end and transcended. The prophets pass away; the commentators pass, and the doctors—these last two very quickly. The poets stand far better, for they take us farther into reality; Jesus best of all, for he reaches the greatest depths in all he feels and says. We have not yet exhausted what he has to say; at times it seems as if we had hardly begun to explore it. In two ways we realize how far ahead he is of us. Whenever the Church returns to him and begins to take him seriously, there is always a resurrection, evidence of a new life; and this could not be if his value were spent.

And, further—for the Church does not always lead the intelligence of mankind—when new light reaches the Church from without, again and again it proves that the new science, or the new scholarship, the new politics or the new psychology, that seemed "dangerous" to the Gospel of Christ, is not inimical in the least, has nothing about it that we could think alien to the spirit of the Jesus of history. Four years of war have taught us much evil, but they have at least revealed that Jesus' conception of man was truer than those estimates commonly framed by politicians, emperors, war offices, and journalists. No political society has yet attempted to organize itself on the basis of the belief that Jesus can be unreservedly right in his view of man. Our economics and our nationalism make Jesus inevitable; there is no getting rid of him till we have transcended him. The war again raised in millions of homes the question that Jesus settled. The New Testament speaks of him abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light (II Tim. 1:10); it suggests that the sting of death is gone, that the tragedy is all resolved in quiet and content by his cross and his resurrection. The gulf between such a view and the sorrow we know in every land of Europe today measures the distance between us and the disappearance of Jesus.

But if Jesus is still a great correction to our thought about men, still more is he to our thought about God. If a man were to make the experiment for a week, never in reading, in thought or in speech, to let the name of God pass without trying to put into it the full meaning that Jesus gives it, the staggering task would bring home to him how far Jesus is from being superseded, how far we are from having exhausted the value of his message about God. Jesus again will remain till we have worked out the full value and meaning of what

he thinks about ourselves in conjunction with God—a rather different thing from either taken separately. So far as I understand the times in which we live, religion is only possible to the modern man along the lines of Jesus Christ. For the really educated man of today there are no other religions. There are people who play at being Buddhists and Hindus; and we may wonder what the reflective Buddhist and the reflective Hindu think about them. All sorts of poses are adopted by men and women, but serious thinkers do not pose; and any man, who comes to grips with history and philosophy, knows that Buddha and Muhammad and the thinkers of Hinduism are not for us. It is Jesus or nobody, and we are still far from grasping the whole significance of what he has to say. God for Jesus, God in Jesus, is an unexplored treasure still; and for us, apart from Jesus, God is little better than an abstract noun; and to people who are serious, abstract nouns are of less and less use. Let us put it this way. If we spoke straight out, we should say that God could not do better than follow the example of Jesus. That means that Jesus fulfils our conception of God;[18] but that is not all, nor is it enough. He is constantly enlarging our idea of God, revealing great tracts of God unsuspected by us. God as interpretable in and through Jesus is unexhausted. Here lies the explanation of the new life that the Church always shows, when it returns to the historical Jesus and takes him seriously. It involves his remaining; and his historicity is once more our foundation.

So far we have been dealing with the part played by Jesus in shaping and clearing thought. But thought is tested in life and conduct. There are about us hundreds of men and women who have found that in the business of keeping level with life, in the more desperate business

[18] This point will be taken up in the next chapter.

of fighting one's character through to something like decency, Jesus is still a dependable factor. We are not dealing with propositions in the air; we are dealing with Someone, they tell us, to whom we can go and say, "Come and help me," and he does. If some psychologists will not quite let us say that, they must concede that we find help when we bring him in. It is not clear that the psychologists are at the end of their discoveries, and their disciples often quote them too soon and with too dogmatic a tone; there are still facts about suggestion to be discovered and to be weighed; and when psychology has said its last about the facts, it is philosophy that has to bring in the verdict on the facts. In the meantime it is the experience of countless souls that where we touch Jesus we do somehow touch the real. Do we not know men and women who have been remade by Jesus Christ? In our own lives, too, we know the help that Jesus has been and is. It is our experience that we can depend upon him, that we can utilize him; and our experience is guaranteed in measure by the similar experience of others. Even if this form of expression needs correction, and granting that our experience, even when so confirmed, needs examination, we have here a strong presumption of evidence; we are justified in thinking that truth awaits us in this direction. If we find help in Jesus it seems reasonable to maintain that Jesus has not passed away, and to attribute some large part of his effect to his being a real historical personality, neither a legend nor a dogma, but a man.

If he has not passed away, he remains the concern of all who take life seriously. We shall never understand the last nineteen centuries, if he and his influence are unfamiliar or unintelligible to us. We shall not have our full equipment for facing the future if so great a Force, intelligible, available and unexhausted, is left by

us on one side. The progress of the Christian life is marked and measured at every stage by increasing dependence on Jesus; Christian and non-Christian, we have to explain this fact in life. We have to understand Jesus Christ, unless our universe is to be chaos.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF DIVINE JUSTICE

All through Christian history we find an emphasis on the judgment seat of Christ, an inspiration at once of terror and of hope, but so far at least, an integral part of the Christian scheme of things. To the historian it is plain that the picture of this judgment seat, the "great white Throne," owes features to older story; and certain reflections at once occur. Has the judgment seat a legitimate place in Christian thought, or is it a survival of pre-Christian tradition and alien? In other words, is it a matter of inheritance or does it rest on some real experience? And again, if experience has been used to point to such a conclusion of human history, is this the sole and necessary inference of the experience, or is another alternative possible? Assuming a "last judgment" of some sort, what relevance or relation can the historical carpenter of Nazareth have to it? For it is at least a remarkable thing that when Christians borrowed from Jews the idea of a Judgment Day, and developed it along the lines of the Greek philosophic myths, they transferred the supreme place to Jesus.

To understand the central idea of a Great Assize, whether Jewish, Platonic, or Christian, it is well to examine the experience which led men to venture such a hypothesis. It must be borne in mind that it is not so much folklore as philosophy that underlies the doctrine, an attempt to justify the ways of God to men. As the

data in the problem are common, we shall take them as the Christian had them presented to him.

I

There are two judgment seats in the New Testament—Pilate's (Matt. 27:19) and Christ's (II Cor. 5:10)—and whatever uncertainty there be about the judgment seat of Christ, there is no mystery, no wonder, no perhaps, about the judgment seat of Pilate; we are touching fact there. The story is familiar. The priests have got their man. One of his followers went back on him and sold him—a thing that has often happened in the East, and is not unknown in the West. They took him to Pilate with an accusation and some sort of evidence. Pilate was no Roman of the old school; he did not hold with all the ancient traditions of self-rule and principle; but he was shrewd and clever, and he saw through the situation. He knew the priests very well; he had also heard a little of the man perhaps—one of those tiresome "kings of the Jews"; but a glance at the man told him at once that there was nothing of importance this time. There is no case; but these people are not in a pleasant mood; and his record is not strong enough to leave him quite independent. So the question rises: What is to be done with this poor creature?

It is a festival, at which the tradition is that a prisoner shall be released; and there is a notable prisoner in his hands, a man whom they all know. Barabbas, we are told, had made an insurrection, and in the course of it there had been murder. The Fourth Gospel says he was a brigand. In the nineteenth century there were men in Greece whom the Turks called brigands, but the Greeks counted them patriots; the difference was merely in the point of view. The Greek people loved them and made

ballads about them, till the name *klepht* (thief, in old Greek) became romantic. Barabbas was probably of this type. He had defied the law. Yes, but foreigners had made the law. He had given trouble to the Government, and the persons killed very likely were Roman soldiers.

According to one gospel (Matthew's) Pilate offers the crowd the choice of Jesus or Barabbas. The others give another account of how the alternative was presented. The talk in the crowd must have been ebb and flow, somehow so. There are no real grounds, says one man, for Jesus being put to death. No, but we are in such a position, that if we free Jesus we kill the patriot. Some people had thought that Jesus might be the Messiah, but he is a hopeless failure. There is no reason why Jesus should not be released on the merits of the case, and Barabbas in accordance with custom. Jesus or Barabbas? Well, we cannot give away Barabbas. But, after all, it is not really *we* who condemn either Jesus or Barabbas to death; we would release both. The responsibility rests with the man who has fastened the alternative upon us, or it is inherent in the situation. All we have to do is to decide who has served our people best. One man calls out for Barabbas, and then everybody shouts "Barabbas!" "And what about Jesus?" There are people at work among the crowd representing the priests, and the cry goes up: "Crucify him!" The only chance to get Barabbas is to have Jesus crucified. So the cry comes with more volume, and Pilate gives them Barabbas; and that is the end of Jesus called Messiah.[1]

Jesus was condemned because he was unpopular. He had had a chance of popularity and had missed it. He

[1] "Pilate," says a clever Irishman, "was the prototype of all English officials, with his condescending yet contemptuous manner to natives, his tolerant scorn of their beliefs, and his occasional feeble generosity toward patriots or prophets." Shane Leslie, *The End of a Chapter*, p. 160.

was unpatriotic. "Render unto Caesar," he said, "the things that are Caesar's." A very clever answer! But on the straight issue of Rome or Israel he had floundered. Barabbas had been definitely patriotic. The teaching of Jesus was unpractical. It was not going to lighten the burden of Roman oppression. It was very pretty for an ideal world, for Utopia, as we say; for Plato's Republic, as they used to say; very beautiful. But we live in a real world; and Jesus was unpractical. Unpopular, unpatriotic, unpractical, unintelligible—it is a heavy indictment, and the periods in history have been few when it would not carry condemnation with it.

The suffering of the innocent is no strange thing; what would war be without it? A certain percentage of miscarriages is always to be expected of justice. Again and again in history we see a general collapse of conscience in government or people, under the influence of fear of some foreign enemy, or for want of the habit of facing new ideas in politics or economics, or even in religion. History is full of such horrors. Nor is it only the past that knows them.

II

After all, the condemnation of Jesus raises the common issue of injustice and wrong. It is the crucial case. So the question rises, Is the thing going to stay there or is it not? Is the judgment seat of Pilate the last word? Our instinct, the instinct of all men, is that what is wrong cannot be left wrong; it must be set right somehow. Men have felt there must be a court of appeal that will put it right.

God's ways, of course, are inscrutable. Children die, and ships are wrecked; the plain laws of Nature work out in pain and perplexity; but there is something worse,

far worse, which has to be explained in God's management of the universe. The most tragic thing of all is man's failure to achieve justice. All society is an endeavor toward justice, from the first dawn of history, from the earliest appeal to chief or king for an award between tribesman and tribesman, from the day when the people called for the first publication of laws, down through all the codes—codes of Moses, of Manu, of Justinian—*Magna Charta, Habeas Corpus;* has not justice been the common life-nerve of every revolution? Does it not underlie all the great movements? And yet, after all these centuries of pain and tragedy, man does not recognize justice; and even where he does, a whiff of terror or passion, and he tramples underfoot the very principle on which he lives, for which he and his fathers have sacrificed so much. Is it not tragic? For does it not imply that man, with all his long experience, all his slowly developed but real sensitiveness, cannot trust himself against passion?

But does not all society, all real life, rest upon the distinction between right and wrong being fundamental, and ever more profoundly real? If experience means anything, is it not the progressive discovery of the nature of right and wrong? And to confuse them, is it not the negation of the very idea of cosmos itself, a flat denial that there is any reality, any principle, in the universe? If the universe is rational, the distinction between right and wrong must be clear, definite, reliable at last, however long the process of discovery; and those who suffered to make the discovery ought surely to have the benefit of it. Otherwise human life is the voyage of a derelict, without chart or helm, and without port.

God's own character is involved; for if God can manage no better thing for such a wonderful spirit as Jesus of Nazareth than to fumble him into the hands of a con-

temptible official like Pilate, to be hustled off to the cross and to perish as miserably as the man who sold him; if that is the whole story, the very idea of God becomes intolerable, and unthinkable. Imagine a God who creates man to feel exquisitely, who gives him an instinct and a passion for right and for justice, and then puts him into a position where all that is best in him is so much more needless and purposeless torture; where, in proportion as he is developed on every side of his nature, he is mocked the more by pain without meaning,[2] spiritual pain, the refined suffering that injustice, triumphant and imbecile, inflicts on the spirit that feels and understands. If that is the action of God, what is he but the most devilish of practical jokers—a hideous and hateful tormentor? Could there be better advice in that case than that of Job's wife—"Curse God and die"? But a man would do well to put his children out of God's reach first. That men do not kill their children and then themselves as a general rule, is an indication that men will not think so ill of the universe, that they will not believe more than momentarily that right and wrong are negligible, that justice is not done. Men, with all history's records of cruelty and injustice, battling on in a world where actual and ideal are so far apart, believe that somehow or other God has still a word to say when man has done his worst.

Then that scene of Pilate and Jesus is not the end of the story? That was the great question with mankind. For centuries men had been thinking and dreaming of another tribunal. From Homer down to Plato men had wrestled with the problem of justice. How could Zeus pretend to rule the universe and look on at what was

[2] Cf. Letter of Keats (on his voyage to Italy and to death): "Is there another life? Shall I awake and find all this a dream? There must be, we cannot be created for this sort of suffering." To Charles Brown, September 28, 1820.

done there? So asked Theognis, neither pietist nor philosopher, but a good conservative, shocked by the overturn of the one society in which he believed. And so asked, sooner or later, all thinking men. The problem, somewhere or other, in one form and another, underlies all the tragedies of the great Greek dramatists. If Agamemnon is murdered, "the doer must suffer"; and the righteousness of the universe is proved by the slaying of Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra and the acquittal of Orestes. A generation later, the question is put again by Euripides, more pungently, and with a closer adherence to the facts of life. In his *Trojan Women*, for instance, punishment seems to impend upon the guilty, but all the time we know, and everybody knows, that Helen goes unpunished and all the misery and shame fall on the guiltless; and there is frankly no recompense to the good who suffer for the sins of others, unless perhaps Hecuba hits the dim clue to it:

> "O stay of Earth, that hast thy seat on earth,
> Whoe'er thou art, ill-guessed and hard to know,
> Zeus, whether Nature's law, or mind of man,
> To thee I pray; for on a noiseless path
> All mortal things by justice thou dost guide."[8]

Then the end of the play comes; her husband is dead, her sons are dead, her daughters are made human sacrifices or given as concubines, her little grandson is killed for policy, and she is led away into slavery; and the question remains. Law of nature, human intelligence, physical basis of earth—what?—can it be that righteousness *is* the norm of all? And Euripides leaves us the question, heightened, not answered.

Plato had to wrestle with the same problem. Obvious injustice revolts people; but supposing one could dodge

[8] *Troades*, 884.

its consequences? "Imagine the unjust man to be master of his craft, seldom making mistakes, and easily correcting them; having gifts of money, speech, strength—the greatest villain bearing the highest character; and at his side let us place the just in his nobleness and simplicity—being, not seeming—without name or reward—clothed in his justice only—the best of men who is thought to be the worst, and let him die as he has lived—scourged, racked, bound, his eyes put out, at last impaled—and all this because he ought to have preferred seeming to being." Men are taught to be righteous for the sake of the rewards; here the supposed order of things is reversed; and the unrighteous man, rich by dishonesty, can worship the gods better and will be more loved by them than the just.[4] It will not do to quote poets and moralists: we all know what convention says (νόμος); what does Nature (φύσις) say? Is the ultimate reality, whatever it be, moral? Or is the whole idea of morality hallucination, or a humbug maintained by people for ulterior ends?

More than once Plato put his reply in the form of myth, premising that, without pressing details, a man of sense would say that this, or something like it, must be near the truth of things. In the *Gorgias* he describes a tribunal in the world beyond, where the judge judges every man as he comes before him, naked soul to naked soul; the marks of earthly rank are gone, and the judge, not knowing who this is, looks with piercing eyes upon the naked soul, and sees this and this and this, and judges exactly by what he sees. Absolute justice, that is Plato's profoundest thought upon the world. Justice is for him the foundation of all existence and its inevitable end.

The Jews had the same idea; but in their pictures the judge was not a shadowy figure like that of Plato's; he

[4] Jowett's summary of *Rep.*, II:360-362; a little abridged.

would be God or God's anointed. In the centuries that overlap the life of Jesus they gave much thought to a last judgment that should put all things right. History could not be meaningless, they said; it would all come right; a catastrophic intervention by God would reveal the moral principle of the universe and establish it forever. The heart of man cried out for a judgment of righteousness and love. The evidence of the highest instincts of the human heart must count for something.

Absolute justice—but how is one to reach it or to define it? What shall the standard be? The real interest in history is to trace the rise of moral sense, the progress of ethical thinking. Justice, as Plato makes clear,[5] is not so simple a thing as a common sense person might suppose; and in fact the ethical standard of mankind has never been a fixed one. No code, human or divine, ever gave it finality, whatever commentators may read into it. Every age, consciously or unconsciously, rethinks the standards of its predecessors; there is ebb and flow, progress and relapse. But, if we take history as a whole, certain things become clear. Whatever relapse a particular community may show, or even mankind together at any stage, there is a progress which is never lost from the outward and obvious to the inward and spiritual, to the larger, the deeper, the more universal. What is more striking is that in a world, where there is so much to depress hope, the fact stands out that, once the larger and deeper conception has become disentangled, whatever common sense or common terror may do in dark hours, the greater ideal is never defeated, it wins its way and it triumphs. History is a witness to God and to God's rationality, and to man's steady resolve to understand God and to capture his mind. In Homer the heroes are on a higher moral plane than the gods, and there they

[5] *Republic*, I:331 F.

stay; till, after centuries of thought and suffering and progress, Plato drew the inference that the Homeric gods are *not* gods, and he drew it largely as a result of the conviction that they fell short in moral sense.

"By all that He requires of me
I know what God Himself must be."

The modern couplet sums up a great deal of history. God has been interpreted over and over again through the moral sense of man; he has revealed himself in man's experience. (We must be careful not to limit the meaning we give to the phrase, but to be sure that we recognize that man's experience includes a large number of elements, all available for his spirit.) Broadly, man's conception of God and man's ethical standards advance or recede together.

Now, whether the universe is rational enough to confirm him or not, it is recognized that, with the coming of Jesus, the conception of God became enlarged with new values, and acquired a richness and depth it never had before.* With this new view of God an inevitable progress followed in man's ethical ideas, in man's demand for justice, his insistence that the universe must be reasonable and just. Jesus may have been wrong in all this, and the universe may fall short of what he conceived to be inevitable from his experience of God. That is not our present affair; the point is that the progressive illumination which life threw, or seemed to throw, upon justice and right, reached a new stage; the old ideas were rethought more powerfully than ever; the standards were advanced with a great sweep forward; more than ever before was asked of the universe, more was expected of God.

* With this Chapter VI deals more fully.

III

The great presentment of the results of this line of thought was given in the picture of the judgment seat of Christ. It owed something of its thought to Plato; it owed much of its color to the Jewish writers of apocalypses.[7] Men have to use the language of their day or to re-create it; and generally the story of a great idea shows a struggle with language. Sometimes the idea triumphs; sometimes the language and its traditions are too much for it. The Jewish apocalyptic offered the obvious language for Christian thought, not the ideal language. Its pictures were sharp-drawn and crude, and at the same time they lacked precision.[8] The catastrophic end of all things was clumsy and rather improbable; and the character of God had arbitrary features and lacked nobility and graciousness; he was drawn too like the average man. Christians laid hold of the great scene of the Judgment Day. Its catastrophic character had an irresistible appeal to men strained beyond endurance in their struggle with the actual—with persecution, doubt, and despair. They varied, as the Jews had varied, in the detail of the scene; were the wicked to be judged (John 5:29), or all men (1 Pet. 4:5)? Was the judgment in a sense accomplished (John 3:18), or was it to come at the end of the world (Rev. 20:11-14)? Was God to be the Judge (Heb. 12:23) or Christ (II Cor. 5:10)?[9]

---

[7] Close analogies with Matthew. 25 are found in Enoch 14:3; 62:5; 90; and other such books, but without the firmness and coherence of the gospel version, in which, too, there is a development in principle.

[8] J. H. Leckie, *World to Come*, p. 27: "It is an excellent rule to suspect all accounts of Jewish doctrine in proportion as they suggest symmetry, order, and logical coherence."

[9] Even if we limit ourselves to St. Paul, scholars find it hard to make a harmony of his teachings; his eschatological views changed with his spiritual growth and experience. Cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and Last Things*, pp. 21, 25; Stevens, *Theology of N. T.*, p. 482; R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudonyma*, I, 529; J. H. Leckie, *World to Come*, p. 181.

A sane treatment of apocalyptic must be on the lines of our usual treatment of parable and of poetry. A forced harmony of details makes foolishness of the real value; the suggestion of each picture must be seized and then the analogy must be dropped. At the same time, we have to recognize the extraordinary poetic value which the Last Judgment has had, for nothing lends itself to great poetry that has not some profound truth in it.

To secure the deeper meaning of the Great Day to come, *Dies irae dies illa,* let us go back to the judgment seat of Pilate. What was most real there? Pilate with his powers of life and death? the priests? the voice of the people? the hideousness of human cowardice and falsity, of mob-psychology? No, there was something more real. After all, it was not Jesus who was on trial before Pilate; it was the Jewish religion, it was the Roman Empire, it was human justice, on trial before Jesus. Pilate was judged for ever there and then by Jesus; and so were the priests, and the people who shouted for Barabbas, some because they wanted him, and some because they did not like to say anything else; and so were all the men and women whose lives were shaped and determined, as they looked at Jesus on the Cross that day. That principle always holds. A man writes himself down when he says he does not like a great work of art, drama, or music, or picture. We exhibit our own characters in our judgments of Jesus Christ; we label ourselves, and, what is more, we give a turn to our development for good or ill. Pilate and Caiaphas and the rest had been, like all men, developing character in the ordinary way—by choices, inclinations, and fancies, by tacit acceptances of principles of life. This day suddenly and for ever declared what type of men they had chosen to be, or had become by that negligence, which after all is a choice too. And, as al-

ready suggested, the day confirmed their choices and fixed their characters; they accepted themselves more definitely as they stood. The attitude of every man that day was partly the outcome of his former life and so revealed it; but it was also a new self-determination brought about by the contact of the character he had developed with something wholly new, a new situation, a new type, and so it became decisive for the future. The day was as decisive for the other onlookers, for those who wept, for those who had looked away and would not see, for Simon the Cyrenian whom (and his sons after him) it brought into the circle of Jesus' followers. And the day was decisive for mankind; if it was to be a choice between Pilate and Jesus, then God's universe must fit and match one of them, and that one could hardly be Pilate. Pilate's universe will not do.

The higher ideal prevails. The moral sense of mankind has moved more and more to the standards of Jesus, as we can see in men's criticisms of the Church and of Christian people. "That," says the world, "is not what you expect of a Christian"; in which is implied that more is expected of a Christian than of another man. In other words, the world has curiously slipped into admitting that the standards of Jesus are at any rate the highest we have yet reached. Anyone who accepts this, is logically involved in a far more serious treatment of sin and in a profounder apprehension of God, a new study of reality. The world, in its more quiet and candid moods, when it is not controversial, knows quite well by now that the character and personality of Jesus are the ultimate standard. However uncertain about God we may be, Christian and non-Christian alike, deep in our hearts, if we put it in plain language, we have a feeling that if God really is like Jesus Christ, things are all right. In blunter language, what we really mean is this,

that if God will mould himself on the example of Jesus, then we can trust him. That means that, for everyone who is dissatisfied with the justice of the world, there is eventually one court of appeal, the tribunal of Jesus Christ, that we live in a world where Jesus is the last word.

The early Christians, and not they alone, went further. They were convinced that Jesus *has* the last word—a proposition not so different as it seems at first sight, if we concede that personality survives death. What is remarkable, is that Jesus would appear to have shared this belief, or something very like it, and this without being absurd or insane. In any case it is strange enough. For picture the carpenter's shop; a customer drops in and orders a plough to be made or a yoke,[10] and the carpenter agrees to make it. Next day you can see him busy with it, bending over his bench, wiping the sweat from his face. You see him on the Galilaean road, dusty and dirty with long travel. You see him sitting by the roadside with a crowd of his friends, as they hand him bread and he passes them the salt. You see him drop off to sleep in a boat with sheer fatigue; and at last you see him hanged on a cross. And then, within one generation, they say the world is going to be judged by that crucified carpenter. It is incredible; and yet mankind at its soberest and quietest has age by age said that it cannot think of anybody else. That is one aspect of Jesus in the experience of men.

IV

That Christians have believed that Jesus would judge the world in person, does not prove that he will. That is not, however, our point. We have to learn what they

[10] Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 88, p. 316 C., says Jesus made these.

have believed and do believe, and why; and the latter inquiry is the harder and the more profitable. We have to go further yet, however, and ask what effect the belief has had in the lives and characters of those who have held it.

But first we must look a little more closely at the belief. It is that we must all, as Paul said (II Cor. 5:10), be inspected, made manifest, uncovered, before the judgment seat of Christ. It will be, as Plato put it, naked soul to naked soul. That has been the Christian thought; that he knows more about us than we know ourselves, and far more than some of our intimate friends know. He knows the temptation; the battle; the half-victory, which the world calls defeat. We have to remember that, if Jesus is the same yesterday and today and for ever, the judge pictured by this early Church on that throne is the same friend who sits, says Paul, on the right hand of God and makes intercession for us—one of the most beautiful pictures of the New Testament. It is here that the simile of the human law court quite breaks down; the human judge limits his survey. But Jesus knows the full story; and he sets the same value on men and women as he did when he was here. In the stories of the dealings of Jesus with men and women we read how highly he valued the human soul; and by the statement that Jesus sits upon that final tribunal is meant that the human soul is to be judged by him who is most interested in it and loves it best.

The outcome of this in ordinary life, has been that with every fresh realization of Jesus men have moved on to a firmer and more searching self-criticism. They have lived in the presence of the Great White Throne, and applied its standards all the way through life to themselves; and we know what great characters they grew. Lord Morley has spoken of men "fortified by the

training in the habits of individual responsibility which Protestantism involves."[11] "Look exactly (ἀκριβῶς) how you walk," wrote Paul (Eph. 5:15). It has been described as the merit of Calvin's theology that it compelled men to contemplate themselves as for ever standing face to face with the sovereign majesty of God.[12] Lack of the self-criticism which Jesus induces is one of the reasons for the comparative failure of the Church today.

Further, in proportion as men have seen the historical Jesus oftener and spent more time in his company, they have been more sympathetic in their criticism of others. Shallow people are always right; they never have any difficulty in deciding the issue—I was going to say on half the evidence, but often they don't want so much; and their judgments are not generous. The real Jesus deepens human nature and sweetens it. Where men have realized the judgment seat of Christ, there has been a closer attention for unexpected manifestations of Jesus Christ. The Son of Man, as he said, comes in an hour when we look not for him. He comes in queer shapes and forms, in new duties, and, I think, particularly in the distasteful duty of thinking things over again. In the picture which Jesus himself draws of the last judgment, we find that the people on the left hand of the Judge got there by the simple process of inattention, by not thinking of things anew and often enough. There has always been poverty, they said, and thought no more of it. There has always been injustice; so we let it go. There has always been ignorance; so we did not trouble about it. Again and again that scene in *King Lear* comes into my mind in this connection. Lear on the heath realizes what poor houseless wretches have all their lives

[11] *Compromise*, p. 240.
[12] A. V. G. Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought*, 303.

through. "Oh! I have ta'en," he cries, "too little care of this." The vision of Jesus on the throne makes men more responsive to truth that comes from the unpopular and the unpractical. It has meant a greater boldness in the confession of Christ. Put the issue: Is it the judgment seat of Pilate or the judgment seat of Christ that is final? If it is the judgment seat of Christ, men have felt secure in the confession of Christ; the growth of the sense of reality about the triumph of Christ has reacted upon their loyalty to him and to his teaching—and this to the great gain of all the world. And what peace of mind has come with the assurance that the last word is with Jesus, and that he and his understand one another, we do not need to read far in Christian literature to find out. A stanza of Charles Wesley may sum it up:

"Jesus, my all in all thou art,
My rest in toil, my ease in pain;
The medicine of my broken heart,
In war my peace, in loss my gain:
My smile beneath the tyrant's frown,
In shame, my glory and my crown."

CHAPTER III

SAVIOURS AND SALVATION

I

The curious thing about the title of Saviour is that, while today it is so natural to use it of Jesus, while it is the most valued and the most endearing of his names, it is not often used to describe him in the New Testament. In that collection, the name Saviour is hardly given to Jesus in the earlier books, and begins to be applied to him only in those which scholars on other grounds think later or doubtful.[1] Jesus is called Saviour oftener in II Peter than in any other book. That is the stranger at first sight, because the words that are associated with Saviour are not so rare. "Salvation," for instance, is freely used by St. Paul and by the writer to the Hebrews, though in the Gospels hardly outside Luke. The verb "to save" is common throughout, and was used by Jesus himself. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." If we ask why the word "Saviour" should not come so freely as "salvation" and the verb "to save," it is perhaps because it had to be redeemed from poorer associations. There are some words of honor never applied to him. In the New Testament Jesus is nowhere spoken of as "Benefactor." In those days "Benefactor" and "Saviour" were royal titles; the Ptolemies and Seleucids had borne them and had passed.

[1] In Luke, John, Acts, Eph., Phil., I John, once each; the name is not used at all in Matthew, Mark, St. Paul's other larger epistles, Hebrews, or the Apocalypse.

The name "Saviour," moreover, belonged to competing religions; there were other gods who were called "saviour," gods of a different order. The mystery religions to which scholars are turning our attention so much (a good deal more than they need, I sometimes think) offered men salvation. There are those today who discover in that offer of salvation a close parallel to the Christian religion. The parallel is by no means so close as is often imagined.[2]

It would be an interesting study to trace the reasons for the adoption of the word "salvation" by the Church in preference to "the Kingdom of God," which was the phrase used by Jesus at least at the beginning of his ministry. One cause for the change would probably be the transplanting of the Gospel to Gentile ground. "Messiah" was done into Greek, and became more a personal name than a description. The whole series of conceptions bound up with the Messiah and the Kingdom of God were foreign to the Greek world. The Greeks and the Hellenized were entitled, if Christian freedom was anything at all, to choose the vocabulary which best conveyed to them the fullness of their new experience. The Jew supposed he knew what Messiah and Kingdom of God meant, though his interpreters varied so widely that a stranger could reasonably plead that the terms lacked definition and did not convey any clear ideas. On the other hand, the Greek in similar way found more content in his own coinage of "salvation," though here, too, more ideas were covered by the term than conduced to clear thinking. So, while the title "Christ" survived, the "Kingdom of God" fell into the background; and, in spite of efforts being made today to bring it forward again,

---

[2] It may be noted that in a very striking passage (*Protr.*, 119) where Clement of Alexandria uses the Mysteries as simile point by point, his reference is not to sacraments but to spiritual vision, etc.

it is possible to maintain that "salvation" was an expression that could carry a larger burden of Jesus' meaning.

Professor Percy Gardner has suggested that the conception of salvation belonged to the religions of men more contemplative than the Jews.[3] Whatever its ultimate origin in Eastern cults, it was at once available to convey the deepest ideas current in religion in the early Roman Empire. It lent itself to Greek individualism, which stood on a higher level of intensity than anything of the kind generally recognized in Judaism. Jeremiah may have been—most people would concede that he was—more personal in his religion, in his relation with his God, than any Greek we can name; but none the less, as the history of the doctrine of immortality shows no less plainly than the civil and political history of almost any Greek state, the individual meant more to the average Greek than to the average Jew. What interested the Greek was not the restoration of a kingdom to a generalized Israel, or anything else in the plural and the abstract, but the development of his own soul, mind, and nature to the utmost, and its securing amid all the changes of worlds and ages. Even those who today revive the Kingdom of God as a sufficient religious ideal can only do it by including tacitly the Greek demand for individual life in the old Hebrew conception, or by letting go something that the Greeks have gained for mankind. It is legitimate, indeed inevitable, to hold that Jesus saw in the individual far more than any apocalyptist of his people ever dreamed, and that when he used the current phrase, he did what he had always to do, he used the best language available, endeavoring as he used it to give it a newer and more glorious connotation. Most of what he meant to convey was included in the term salvation. Here, once more, it was not till the Greek received the

[3] *Growth of Christianity*, p. 128.

Gospel, that a language was found at all equal to expressing the mind of Jesus.

But we use language at our own peril; and the term salvation needed revision and purification, and it has had it. Today it is difficult for anyone not an archæologist, and unacquainted with Indian thought, to realize that the term is susceptible of other than a conventional Christian meaning. Hence when we are told that Christianity was only one of a number of religions which offered men salvation, an idea is often conveyed that the Christian religion hardly differed from the rest. A closer examination of the meaning of these offers of salvation and the characters of the cults that made them is necessary.

There are, however, some preliminary considerations. First of all, the documents, on which our knowledge of those religions depends, have to be dated; and a liturgy is perhaps the hardest of all books to date, in that it is very generally a mosaic of fragments from older documents and may be endlessly edited and reedited. This formula or that prayer may be far older than the rest of the book; the larger part of the compilation may be good evidence for the beliefs of an earlier day, or the whole may be quite modern work, done in an artificially archaized style. In such literature borrowing is easy and adaptation is easy, especially before the invention of printing, when books were still made singly and in manuscript; and the easier such operations were for the priest, the less surely can they be checked by the scholar hundreds of years later. It is, again, arguable that to amalgamate features found in different cults and so to form a common type of mystery religion, and then to impose this type upon the cults and to assume that they generally conformed to it, is not legitimate scholarship. Mr. Edwyn Bevan, in a striking article in the *Hibbert Journal* (October, 1912), pointed out that more is talked

by moderns about saviour-gods and their deaths and resurrections than the evidence is readily equal to proving; that they are not at all so plentiful as some people suppose; that, when some Gnostic sects have them and others do not, it is not enough for a scholar to label them Gnostic gods; and that the Gnostic sects which have saviour-gods may as probably (or under the circumstances more probably) have borrowed from Christianity as Christianity from Gnosticism. It is, further, to be noted that to the end Christian polemic is directed against the Olympian gods and that allusions to competing sacraments are not so common. Julian the Apostate prayed with fervor to Athena.

But, if we knew for certain that the Gnostic sects and the mystery religions had every one a doctrine of salvation and even a personal saviour-god, not much is proved. Salvation is a vague term. It makes all the difference from what these various cults offered salvation, and to what, or for what, and by what means. We find that men's minds in the centuries round the Christian era were obsessed by astrology[4] and other doctrines from the East; they were full of planets and their influences, of fate and destiny; and all these things were interwoven with religion, with belief in immortality, with dread of the long journey before the soul, if transmigration with its "sorrowful weary wheel" were true. Men wanted assurance for their personality, and escape from fate and destiny,[5] and all the fears of life and death.

It is a curious and interesting thing, that some of the most beautiful phases of Indian religion in these last centuries have had the same endeavor, to set men free

[4] See generally Cumont, *Astrology and Religion,* and his *Oriental Religions in Roman Empire;* and P. Wendland's brilliant book, *Die hellenistische-römische Kultur.*

[5] Cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions,* pp. 24, 216; Welland, *op. cit.,* p. 176; Reitzenstein, *Hell. Myst. Relig.,* p. 38; *Poimandres,* p. 103.

from the chain of act and deed; free by virtue of a union with a God who will lift them out of it all, lift them out of the hands of fate, out of the power of death and rebirth, and set them free from all the play of circumstance and pain and sorrow. The very striking poems of Tuka Ram,[6] the Maratha mystic of the same period as the English Vaughan, haunt the reader. "I know thy faith," says Tuka, addressing his god, Vitthoba, "I have grasped thy feet, I will not let them go. I will not take anything to let them go. I have clung to them so long that thou wilt find it an old affair and a perplexing one to get rid of me. Tuka says, I will not let thee go, not if thou givest me all else." "He fastens us to his waistcloth and takes us quickly across the stream of the world." "I have had enough of running . . . now take me on thy hip; do not make me walk any more." Those who have seen the Indian child riding on his mother's hip, will know what Tuka means, when he says: "We sit on his hip, hence we have full confidence." Some of Dr. Nicol Macnicol's verse renderings of Tuka might be interpolated among Cowper's poems from Madame Guyon, and not be detected without reference to the French.

But what is "the stream of the world"? In other poems Tuka speaks of the awful prospect of ceaseless incarnation that the doctrine of *Karma* involves; "eight million times have I to enter the gate of the womb"; and he tells of the desolation that the doctrine makes of love and friendship, and of the family. He compares son, brother, father, and wife to logs jammed on a stream in flood; the key-log is drawn; the water rushes over the land and the logs are scattered and none touches its neighbor again; and so it is with all we love in the stream

[6] Translated in three volumes by Frazer and Marathe. See also a selection in English verse in Nicol Macnicol's *Psalms of Maratha Saints* (1919).

of the world, we meet to part for ever, while each pursues up and down the weary cycle of eight million lives. Tuka and other mystics of India believed that from this a man might be saved by *Bhakti*, by self-annihilating devotion to a friendly god.[1] *Karma* and *Bhakti* are the two poles of Indian religious thought. Vitthoba seemed to Tuka to promise salvation; but even if Madame Guyon and he have some affinity, as all mystics are said to have, it was not such a salvation as Tuka conceived of, that William Cowper believed he had lost.

The salvation offered by the mystery cults of the Roman Empire was of much the same character; it was escape from death and its concomitants, from reincarnation, but not from sin, unless salvation from sin contributed to the main purpose. Their moral teaching was perhaps not negligible, but it was not in the first line. It was of secondary importance; and when morality takes a subordinate place, it may as well be left out. It remains a fact that these religions fell far short of the teaching of the great philosophers of antiquity.

Into this world, full of moral impulses and moral teaching, full of religions that offered salvation, comes a new religion, which unites the moral and the devotional, which brings ethics into the very heart of religion and makes God the center of morality. Those who speak of Christian salvation as if it were merely what was offered by those old religions—escape from death and fear of death, or, as if it were some doubtfully moral device invented by Jesus to tamper with God's moral order—can surely not have looked far into the mind of Jesus himself. Nothing can be less like the meaning of Jesus.

One thing, however, we have to note. The Christian idea of salvation has never really been a fixed one. It has always tended to enlarge its scope as men have en-

[1] Cf. Nicol Macnicol, *Indian Theism*. pp. 107 ff.

tered into the ideas of Jesus; and that is one of the ways in which Jesus has asserted himself, and one of the reasons why he remains. He keeps opening the eyes of the Church to larger vision of his meaning and of his thought. Salvation must have a wide range when it comes from Jesus. Could he have offered men a salvation as pitiful as some of us conceive? His conception of salvation will be large as his thoughts of men, and deep and high and wonderful as his thoughts of God; greater as we grow to understand it.

II

We can begin by asking from what the Christian religion offered men salvation, and offers it still.

First of all we may put fear. It is extraordinary, the range of fear in human experience. There are physical fears of pain, sickness, and death, fears that we share with the animals. There are more human fears like the fear of bereavement, of which the animal knows a little, and men and women so much. There are fears of death, not because it wipes out *me,* but because it wipes out someone else.[8] A man of fine spirit spoke to me of his daughter: "I would give anything," he said, "to have it proved to me that I should see her again." If we refuse to be overborne by death and add to the range of our outlook a world beyond the grave, the very addition increases the scope of fear and doubt. There rise the horror, the uncertainty, and the bad dreams of that other world in which we may find ourselves. The ancient world was possessed with the fear of daemons; a large

[8] To illustrate this, three familiar lines of one of the finest spirits of antiquity may be quoted—*Georgics,* 2:490:

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari.

part of mankind today is haunted with the fear of being born into this world again. The writer to the Hebrews speaks of men who all their lives, through fear of death, were subject to bondage. Fear, then, is obviously the first thing from which we have to be saved. It is worth noting that the early Christian gave a large place to death among the things from which Christ saves. Paul obviously connected physical death with the coming of moral evil into the world—a view difficult to the modern biologist, and not based, so far as we know, on anything in the teaching of Jesus.[9]

The Christian brought news to the world that Jesus lives, and that Jesus has "abolished" death, and brought life and immortality to light. The ancients thought meanly of woman; woman was the weaker vessel, and they saw with surprise women laying down their lives for Jesus Christ, without having a Plato to write about them, as Socrates had. Women and slaves, the cheapest of human beings, showed no fear of pain and no fear of death for his sake. We have already considered the Christian victory over the daemons. Thus the chief fears of the ancient world were overcome.

But there are other things more insidious than fear; and here is the profounder and more permanent half of the early Christian message. "Joy or grief, fear or desire, what matters it?" asked Horace,[10] quoting the established classification of motives. Socrates held that if a man *knew*, he would not sin; but even an Ovid could mend that with his *video meliora proboque, deteriora*

[9] It appears to be a Jewish idea. Cf. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 260. Dr. D. S. Cairns writes to me: "Of course it was a practically *universal* Jewish idea, deeply rooted in the O.T. . . . Jesus quite certainly regarded disease as part of the kingdom of evil, and as something that ought never to have been. There is not the slightest indication that he thought differently from Paul, and a good deal to indicate that he agreed with him and all other Jews of his day." I am not sure that Jesus' acceptance of current ideas can be counted on so certainly.

[10] *Epistles*, I, vi, 12; *Cf.* Virgil, *Æn.*, vi:733; and Plato, *Phaedo*, 83, B.

sequor, passion triumphant over knowledge and sweeping man into evil with open eyes. "What I would not, that I do," said Paul, carrying the matter a stage further. Some of the ancients explained sin by making it the outcome of contact or relation with some external thing. The sounder psychologists saw with Jesus that it comes from within, but not all of them realized its significance as an expression of a man's real self. The light that leads astray is, as Burns said, light from heaven—the perversion of a gift of God, of the highest of his gifts. And this is effected by passion, which starts a new group of fears. In the war many a man was less afraid as to what the enemy might do than as to what he might himself do. Fear of moral lapse comes to be in the highest and ultimate group of fears; and with it comes the darkest of all things, despair. Fear, passion, and despair all coming from within, there was a place for the Christian message of a man's salvation from himself. Jesus Christ can set you free, it ran, from the man within, so that passion and anger and craving will no longer rule you. The mystery religions had a cheaper psychology and an easier, and they did not really touch this region of fear —a contrast which makes more wonderful the salvation which Jesus brought.

So far, we have thought of perils round about us, and of evil within. But God, where does God touch this story? Paul speaks of the law and its value, but also of its terror; and as the Greek philosophers traced the origin of law to nature, he traced it to God; the law was of God's giving, implanted in man's nature. The Ten Commandments are written large in human society. There is no real human society without them. If we could imagine God abolished, we should still have to keep the Decalogue —"thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not kill." But God is more than the law. The

Scripture speaks of the wrath of God, not as the heathen who feared the irritability of his gods, but of a wrath of God directed against men who broke his law. The burden of the law on a nature like Paul's was incessant and it filled life with boding and fear. "Fear hath torment" (I John 4:18).

The object of pagan worship has again and again been to placate the ill-temper of gods, or, to induce the gods to go away and leave the worshipper alone. The wonderful part of the Christian message was that men were given deliverance not by being taken out of the way of the wrath of God, but by being brought into the very heart of God. There is another phase of this. When Paul wants to describe a life that is desperate, he speaks of man being without hope and without God in the world. Without God—how like that is to Jesus' picture of the prodigal son! He was without his father, as he had wished to be. He went to a far country to have a good time, as people call it, and like other people who have a good time, he went through his money; he came to starvation, and he was without food, without friends and without his father. It was no life at all; not natural, but abnormal, an existence of despair. "This is the condemnation that . . . men loved darkness rather than light" (John 3:19), as men will whose eyes are in bad condition. The Christian promise was of deliverance from all this negation of life, from the abnormal, from the unnatural, from despair; but the Christian "return to Nature" and "life according to Nature" had a personal center.

III

When Jesus tells the story of the prodigal son, he brings out, with a beauty that grows upon those who try to understand him, the great surprise that awaited

the youth on his return. He hoped for food, and perhaps some clean clothes; but the first thing to which he was restored was his father. He came back like a tramp, and the first touch of home is his father's kiss on his cheek; his father's arms round his neck. He was restored to the best robe, the most splendid entertainment, yes, and something more; to sonship, to the real life of the family, to his father. And in all this, the real restoration was to his father, and the rest followed. What a picture! The personal relation lies at the heart of all Jesus' good news.

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost," he said. He enters into the house of the strong man not to destroy but to reapply what is held there in bondage. He restores to men their lost vision; he finds the lost faculty and gives it back; the lost aptitude; the lost sympathy; the lost intuition. Men have never been quite able to explain what salvation is. They have always used metaphors. Paul says it is a new creation. A man is made over again, very much as if God took a man to pieces and made a new Adam out of him, and put the new Adam in a new world. The Fourth Gospel sums it up as being born again. In an ancient poem about spring, one line runs: "New spring, singing spring, spring the world reborn."[11] One would almost think it a description of what we read in the New Testament.

Century after century we find the Christian Church speaking in the same way about the gladness of the Holy Spirit. Some of the words which the ancients used about the Holy Spirit have gone downhill. I suppose it was because people could not believe them to be true of the Holy Spirit and the Christian life; for the ancient Christians said that the Church was hilarious, that the Christian spirit is a hilarious spirit, a gay spirit. The

[11] *Pervigilium Veneris*, II: *"Ver novum, ver jam canorum, ver renatus orbis est."*

words hardly seem reverent today. But think of the buoyancy of a life which has been saved in earnest. Some people do not give its value to "life" as used in the New Testament; they picture the Christian life as a starved affair, and think that the Christian can never enjoy anything, but that, if he starts to enjoy himself, he is always told "Don't." Jesus never said that. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more overflowingly"—the utmost development of the ideal and natural life, the real achievement at last of its promise.

In the mind of Jesus it would appear that a man is above all things saved for God, for in the story of the prodigal the happiest figure is the father. Salvation is restoration to God, "peace with God" as Paul calls it (Rom. 5:1). Here we have once more to give to the name God the whole connotation that Jesus gave it; salvation has to be measured by the scale of Jesus' conception of God. How much, he would suggest, would God imply by salvation? No mere rescue from an external hell, as Odysseus escapes from the sea and comes ashore scathed and stripped, and only just alive, if saved. That is not how Jesus conceives of God doing things. "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Salvation, again, in the speech of Jesus, means that the man saved gains a new sense of the significance of other men; that he puts a new value on manhood and its opportunities; that he is captured for all the ideals of Jesus Christ, as they bear on men, the family, and the society; that he is found in the service of Jesus Christ for the ransom of the world, for the setting free of mankind. That is not a negative idea. It is positive, and the larger the more we think it out, as large as the measure of Jesus Christ himself (Eph. 4:13). This is not theory;

it is the actual experience of the Christian world. We may fairly allow that Christian experience has given a very different value to the term "salvation" from what it had in the mystery religions.

IV

The mystery religions gave salvation by ritual and fasting, by sacred food and mystic drink. When we come to discuss how Jesus saves men it will be clear at once to anyone who has studied him, that his way will be another, and something much more spiritual, and more intimate. When we ask what it is, difficulties crowd upon us, so much has been thought and written upon it, so standardized are many of our ideas. Metaphors from sacrifice, suggestions from the mystery religions, modes of thought borrowed from Roman law, have all affected our ordinary views, till it is difficult now to explain what Jesus did without a preliminary discussion to make our explanatory terms themselves intelligible. Today, instead of using metaphor, we are more apt to ask what happens in salvation, conversion, or whatever it be called—psychologically; what passes between Christ, or God, and the man concerned.

Here, though it may seem to run counter to what has just been said, an illustration may help. It has the advantages of not being theological, of having no history, and of being drawn from nature. Some years ago the cotton crop in Egypt began to fail. The cotton plant was doing badly; it had a parasite growing upon it. A botanist was sent out to Egypt, and he embarked on a series of experiments. He found that, when the cotton was kept in a certain temperature, the parasitic plant throve and killed it. As the temperature of the glass-house was raised, the parasite plant drooped, and the

cotton throve; and finally the cotton got clear of it. After a while he was able to tell the cotton-growers what was wrong; they were irrigating too much; the ground was cold with water; and when the roots struck down into the cold earth, the plant was chilled and the parasite grew. When they changed the irrigation arrangements, the parasite died, and the cotton plant lived, saved by a change of temperature.

The curse of human life is the failure to develop. A man becomes absorbed by this or that, by pleasure, by business, by vice it may be, or by wholly legitimate interests carried out of proportion; and he becomes, as we say, one-sided. Nothing saves him but a human interest in a real person; he falls in love and revises all his standards, and, unconsciously influenced by the woman's love for him and by his love for her—if she be a woman of any real worth and capable of helping a man—he develops into a new creature, as we casually say. If she bears him a child, the child lifts husband and wife into a new atmosphere, alters the temperature of their lives, and a great deal of selfishness is atrophied by the warmth and interest that the child makes, as its life and mind grow and expand; they live in a region of higher thoughts and keener hopes and delights. Psychologically, love, in such a case as this, does for a man what the higher temperature did for the Egyptian cotton.

The simplest and most natural explanation of what Jesus effects comes to us along the same lines. Jesus changes the spiritual temperature and the parasite sin dies; and the natural man[12] revives and grows into what God meant. It has been one of our greatest mistakes to

[12] We need not be frightened of the Authorized Version's translation of an adjective of St. Paul's. Perhaps if we took refuge from a word of Latin origin in one of Greek, we might say "physical" for Paul's ψυχικός. Prof. Moffatt says, "unspiritual" (I Cor. 2:14), and "animate" (I Cor. 15:44). "Natural" is better kept for φύσις and its derivatives.

think that the Christian virtues are anything but natural; we have abused the word "natural" and degraded it. Nature, in its true sense, is the thought of God; and man degraded and atrophied by sin is not natural. The gracious side of human nature (as real every whit as the ugly) gives us the clue. The beautiful instincts, the powers of mind and character, make, we feel, the true man. What Jesus does is to give them a chance to grow. He has opened the windows of the human heart, or rather has tempted the human heart to open its own windows, to the sunshine of God. It would seem as if St. Paul had anticipated us here, when he says that "God has shined in our hearts, in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6).

Those of us who think about germs (and most people do today), who are interested in hospitals, know that the air of God and the sunshine of God are two of the most healing and protecting things the body can have. Jesus told men, and, what is more, he made men believe, that what we want is more of God, and not less. The sunshine of God was let into the human heart by Jesus, and the real, beautiful human plant began to thrive in that sunshine, and sin to die. He brought men to the point where they would be reconciled to God. He did this by his death on the Cross—that death in which he showed the real nature of God, and brought men to believe that God does not leave them and their pain and sin alone, but identifies himself with man's life. Jesus came into the world to make people willing to believe that God was ever so much better than they thought, to offer reconciliation, freedom of mind and heart's-ease.

It is always a person who opens the door to the higher life for us—wife, child, father, mother, friend. The great book that inspires us was written by a man or woman of a great personality. All the best things and the greatest, the great idea, the new vision, peace of

mind, come to us, each of them, through a person; and salvation in the highest sense came through Jesus. "Jesus," as Herrmann says,[13] "did not write the story of the Prodigal Son on a sheet of paper for men who knew nothing of himself." Men looked into their language and found that he was the only person to whom the name Saviour really belonged; and since his day it has not been given to kings; it has not been given to other gods; it has become more and more his own, until today the word means no one else.

[13] *Communion with God*, p. 132.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAMB OF GOD

The death of Jesus has been the subject of more thought, one may say without exaggeration, than anything that has occupied the mind of man. No treatment of it ever satisfies listener or reader as complete or adequate; the best gives one the sense of having touched, as it were, the mere hem of the garment. Whenever we look at him, and think again of his death with any firmness and reality, most of our previous thought seems to be of little consequence, and we are left with the feeling of a great unexplored world before us, of more beyond. In this it resembles the great things of Nature, which are never exhausted, which always have mystery and wonder and happiness in reserve. A man who supposes that he can speak with any adequacy of the death of Jesus is simply not thinking about it at all. But the very difficulty of the subject and the failure of attempts to deal with it are compulsive reasons for studying it. It is too central, too vital, to go unstudied. Better to fail than not to attempt it, for failure will at least reveal something of the greatness of the subject.

I

There are many theories as to the death of Jesus; and a certain number of them, all ancient and all derived from metaphor, we may group under three heads. There are those that turn on sacrifice; and here (on one side of

it) we may include the theory of substitution. There are those that rest on conceptions derived from Roman law—and deal with courts, fines, penalties and satisfaction, with "persons" too. There are those, the simplest, the most readily understood, and in antiquity the most immediately moving, which are connected with metaphors of slavery; redemption, ransom, price, and freedom are the keywords here. None really covers the whole story. A metaphor like a parable may be expected to light up one aspect of a subject. To press either beyond the proper point which it should illuminate, to force meaning from all its details (or, more often, into them) destroys its value. People who have no feeling for language take things literally; the legal mind does it; and both classes have had a large share in interpreting Christian doctrine. Where the metaphor is drawn from conceptions that are fairly stable, the difficulties are less; but there are few sources of confusion more fatal than the use of language, which seems to convey a clear idea but is really indefinite. A wholly unfamiliar expression or illustration challenges thought; but a familiar phrase, that is not generally thought out, passes without challenge. The simple trick of asking a man to write down the figures on the dial of his watch, may illustrate the point; he thinks he knows them, but the chances are he makes at least one clear mistake; the mind usurps the function of the eye and is wrong. If we are to treat religion as seriously as we do science or literature or politics, we must be sure of our terms. Careless language always means loose thinking, and it suggests unreality which serious people are quick to feel. Little wonder that men have leaned to the suspicion that the Christian religion is unreal, when Christian terminology is so often slipshod.

It is not our present affair to pursue inquiry into all the fields of metaphor where Christians have strayed.

But sacrifice has been a central thought, and it differs from most of the other metaphors, notably from those mentioned above, in having had no secular history. It has always been a religious term, uniquely associated with ancient religion through the whole course of its development; for to many minds in all periods the sacrifice has been the very center of all religion. This of itself will explain why the word is so difficult and ambiguous. Religion has changed constantly, and the feelings waked from age to age by sacrifice have been those which men are most reluctant to analyze. It is worth noting, however, that the men who did analyze them became the pioneers in religion.

"The Lamb of God" is a very interesting phrase, and it has gathered a great mass of associations. It does not belong to the earliest stratum of the New Testament, though Paul's "Christ our passover" (I Cor. 5:7) points towards it. It is put by the Fourth Gospel in the mouth of John the Baptist in a sentence that attributes to Jesus the taking away of the sin of the world. In the Apocalypse the visions of the exile are haunted with the Lamb victorious, the Lamb unlocking the sealed book of God's purposes, the Lamb surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand clad in white, who

> "Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
> Their triumph to his death."

To understand the writer, we must ask how he comes to interpret life so, and why he links the victory of Christ with the figure of the sacrificial lamb. For, of course, it comes from Hebrew ritual, with a memory of the Passover. Hebrew ritual suggests the symbol; but why did anyone look for a symbol? What was the experience that sought expression? The Passover lamb was a symbol of a number of things—of a great escape

from bondage to begin; and its reappearance in the Apocalypse suggests that the Christian had in his mind the sense of a great deliverance. It suggests acceptance by God, and God's care for his own; and these also were in the thoughts of the great Christian writer. Gradually, by thinking through his language, his turns of phrase, and his symbols, we come face to face with a man who associates a great deal of real experience with Jesus Christ.

But it will not quite do to say that sacrifice is the natural word to use to unlock the mystery of Jesus. For today, after nineteen centuries of experience of Jesus, almost every idea that men then associated with sacrifice is lost or transformed—a curious commentary on the notion that the use of the word was obvious. If we are to understand what the writers of the Bible say about sacrifice, we have for the time to strip our minds of all that Jesus has done in reshaping our speech. When I think now of sacrifice, I see a Hindu temple in the bright sunlight of a December day, a temple gaudy with blues and yellows and whites, tawdry and dirty, and thronged with pilgrims. Here was a sacred tree with votive rags tied on every bough; on the other side was a group of priests, naked from the waist up (one of them telling us he is a B.A. of the University), and near them was a little goat, a sacrifice, to be given to the goddess. One of the priests caught it up, held its front legs back against its sides, put its head in a great wedge; and with one slash of a big knife the head was off and the blood spurted out. When I read in *Hebrews* that "it is not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin," I think of Kalighat, and I understand. People today associate primarily self-sacrifice with "sacrifice"; not so the ancients.

One day in the market of Maymyo, in Upper Burma, an

American friend and I stood by an old man who was selling tapers of some fragrant kind. The missionary, knowing well what they were, asked him: "And what are those for?" He said they were to be given to the god. "But what does the god do with them?" And the old man said: "I don't know; we give them to the idol." "I don't know!" The ancient world, when it crossquestioned itself, did not know where exactly in religion was the place of sacrifice. Even of the Hebrews Professor A. B. Davidson wrote that "the sacrificial system is left in the Old Testament without explanation as regards redemptive relations, except in a general way."[1] And to think in a general way is a most fertile source of error, as the Greeks have taught us, from Socrates onward.

II

The longer the history of an idea, the less chance there is that at any moment it will be used clearly. Old memories and emotions, old associations linger and confuse the impression; and where truth of utmost moment is concerned, an indefinite impression does not much help thought. A survey of the development of the conception of sacrifice will put us in a better position to deal with its use in Christian thinking. Six stages may be noted for clearness' sake, if it be understood that, while logically they are distinct, chronologically they overlapped in the most perplexing way.

The first stage, which anthropologists can recapture for us, is one so old that it appears to antedate private property[2]—a fact of the utmost moment in interpreting the ideas then associated with sacrifice, for it practically eliminates the individual from the act. The sacrifice is

[1] A. B. Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 307.
[2] W. Robertson Smith, *Early Religion of the Semites*, p. 395.

tribal, and it is a tribal meal, shared by god and men, eating together[3] for the "reinforcement of both divine and human life."[4] The victim is an animal, but not substituted, as ancient thinkers later on supposed, for a human being; for early man believed in the "full kinship of animals with men."[5] A living bond was established between god and worshippers in this common meal, whose fundamental idea was sacramental communion.[6] The operation was as physical in the case of the god as of the man. The god drank the blood of the victim; that is to say, it was poured over the stone, which was the god, or (later on) represented him or was his dwelling (*beth-el*, *βαίτυλος*.) "The blood is the life," we read in Deuteronomy (12:23); and the scene in the *Odyssey*, where the ghosts crowd round Odysseus, explains how it is. Such ghosts as he allows to drink the blood of the sacrificed sheep regain a fugitive life; "My mother came and drank the dark blood; and forthwith she knew me and with wailing spake winged words."[7] Before she drank she could neither recognize her son, nor speak to him. The blood in sacrifice repaired the waning force and efficiency of the god; and when restored he was more likely to give victory, or crops, or whatever men had felt him to be failing to manage before. The conception, however strange and crude in our eyes, was not unnatural for people who did not yet distinguish clearly between matter and spirit. At this stage sacrifice is closely akin to magic; and the borderline between primitive religion and magic is hard to trace.

In the second stage, men begin to lay more stress on the mind of their god than on his physical necessities, and they conceive that the business of sacrifice is to reconcile their god to them rather than to repair his

[3] *Ib.* 252. [4] *Ib.* 257. [5] *Ib.* 124, 365. [6] *Ib.* 439. [7] *Odyssey*, xi:152.

energies.[8] Sacrifice is a gift to placate an offended god. The ground of his irritation may be unknown or, if guessed, may be quite trivial. He has, however, to be coaxed out of his ill-temper. This type of sacrifice, the piacular, does not primarily include the idea of sin,[9] but it recognizes some mental activity and feeling in the god. It is said to have had but a small part in the development of the higher sense of sin that we find in the Old Testament.[10] The "presents," which Genesis says Cain and Abel offered, have a parallel in the Greek poet: "Gifts persuade the gods, gifts persuade awful kings."[11] Primitive law and primitive morality deal almost entirely with acts, not with motives. It was late in history, and a great forward step taken, when Draco in Athens distinguished between intentional and accidental homicide. But this second stage represents a distinct advance in thinking.

The third stage gives us the piacular sacrifice, more properly so called—the sin-offering, a gift made in acknowledgment of wrong done by the offerer or by those whom he represents. What the idea of the wrong is, depends naturally on the current conceptions of morals; but the introduction of moral ideas into sacrifice marks a great epoch in human thought. The second and third stages overlap in history, and they both represent a more developed and thought-out belief than the first, in the possibility of god and man being more or less mutually intelligible. Probably, if heads are counted, these stages are more important than any of the others; views of these types meet us all over the world both in antiquity and today. But the real progress of religion depends on

[8] Robertson Smith, *Early Religion of the Semites*, p. 396.
[9] *Ib.* p. 401.
[10] *Ib.* p. 415.
[11] The line is quoted with disapproval by Plato, *Rep.*, III, p. 390 E, but he does not say who is the poet. It is referred to by Euripides, *Medea*, 964.

their being transcended. While it is well said that "the cultus is the heathen element in Israelite religion,"[12] we must note the desire to be right with God. From now onward even more clearly than before, all progress depended on the growth of the conception of God.

The fourth stage, represented among the Hebrews by the Prophets, by Plato among the Greeks, shows a startling development. "Nothing," wrote Professor Bruce, "is more remarkable in the prophetic character than an exquisite sensitiveness to everything savoring of insincerity."[13] How profound and searching the prophetic mind was, is not quickly realized, till we grasp how persistent both in Judaism and outside it were the older views of sacrifice. In the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II (about 760-746 B. C.), Amos went to Bethel, and spoke the mind of Jehovah on what he saw there; Jehovah cried: "I hate, I despise your feasts; I will not smell in your solemn assemblies" (Amos 5:21). It is the more strange, because Amos says no word in condemnation of the idolatry of Bethel. That was left for Hosea, whose rendering of Jehovah's feeling about sacrifice was twice quoted by Jesus: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6). Isaiah, speaking for Jehovah, says, "I delight not in the blood of bulls" (1:11-13). Jeremiah more sweepingly says that Jehovah had *not* spoken about sacrifice at all when he made his famous covenant with Israel (Jer. 7: 21-22), and he is explicit on the failure of the religion of Moses; a new covenant will have to replace the old, a religion within the heart (31:31). The second Isaiah (40:16) and some of the Psalmists are as emphatic (Psalms 40:6; 50:8-14). Whether the Prophets would have approved of sacrifice if accompanied by morality and inward religion, is not the issue; those who

[12] Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 422.
[13] A. B. Bruce, *Apologetics*, p. 278.

wish to reconcile their utterances with a pre-critical view of the Pentateuch, may urge that they would have; but it is at least clear that for the Prophets sacrifice was not in the forefront of religion, while for their contemporaries it was. When a man has once grasped that religion is not ritual but mind, when he is a pioneer in this belief, it is generally safer to assume that he takes a bolder view than the temporizing people who endeavor to reconcile old and new and to minimize contrasts. It is of interest to note how swiftly the Christian apologists seized on these passages in the Prophets, how thoroughly alert they were to their real meaning, and how trenchantly they used them to prove to the Jew that the age of sacrifices was over, and that there was no compromise possible any longer on the issue, and, sometimes, that the whole association of sacrifice with the religion of Jehovah had been nothing but a stupid blunder on the part of Israel.[14]

Plato was as clear as the Prophets that sacrifice was a mistake in religion, that it rested on a wrong view of the gods altogether, and that it confused the moral sense. "Envy," he said, "stands outside the divine choir."[15] In the *Laws*[16] he signalizes three great errors among men's ideas as to the gods: first, the belief that there are no gods; second, the concession that there are gods, who have, however, no interest in human affairs; third, the worst error of all, that there are gods, interested, too, in man and his doings, but gods who are easily influenced by sacrifice. "Quacks and prophets," he says elsewhere,[17] "go to rich men's doors and persuade them that they have power from the gods, by means of sacrifices and chants, to cure any wrong deed of their own or

[14] Cf. Justin's *Trypho;* Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.;* Barnabas.
[15] Plato, *Phaedrus,* 247 A.
[16] Plato, *Laws,* x:885.
[17] Plato, *Republic,* II, 364 A. ff.

their ancestors in a course of pleasures and feasts"; for a human feast with abundant wine accompanied sacrifice both in Greece and in Palestine. The Greek world receded from the clear thinking of Plato; the fear of death, the spell of the past, the charm of ritual religion, were too strong; but Stoics and Epicureans were alike insistent that sacrifices served no purpose at all in religion.[18]

The fifth stage is obvious. In Israel, the priests adjusted their theory of sacrifice to the teaching of the Prophets, toning down the words of the bolder thinkers, as the friends of the obsolete always will. Sacrifice became symbolic; it was given a moral connotation which it had not originally had; it was by all means to be maintained, while the prophetic warning to cleanse the heart was of course important too. The old books were welded with the new Priestly Code, and the Pentateuch resulted. In this period, as under the Macedonian dynasty, the Jews never let history stand between themselves and their ancestors;[19] their religion was *semper eadem.* The correct theory was that sacrifice was ordained, and suggested to men, directly by God.[20] In the reestablished temple at Jerusalem sacrifice was regularly made till Titus destroyed city and temple in A.D. 70; and it is of interest to note who maintained it. The priestly family of Zadok gave their name to the Sadducees; conservative in ritual, they were conservative in thought, and repudiated modern doctrines of spirit and angel and the soul's eternal life.[21] At the same time, they compromised in practice and policy with Hellenism and honestly earned by their teaching and their lives the contempt of good Jews. "They could only persuade the rich," says Josephus.

---

[18] Cf. Seneca, *Ep.*, 95, 47-50.
[19] P. Wendland, *Hell. Röm. Kultur*, pp. 198, 199; Drummond, *Philo*, I, p. 242.
[20] A. B. Davidson, *Theol. O. T.*, p. 311.
[21] Acts 5:17; Josephus, *Antt.*, xviii:1, 4; xiii:10, 6. W. Fairweather, *Background of Gospels*, 149-153.

The sixth stage is represented by the religion of the synagogue.[22] The priesthood of Jerusalem had secured that sacrifice should only be made in their temple; their monopoly was secure; but here, as often, the by-products of success were more important. Jews, scattered over the world, from Babylon to Italy, unable to maintain the practice of three pilgrimages a year to Jerusalem (Deut. 12:5-11), had to fall back on their own devices for the maintenance of their religion and the education of their children. The synagogue became their center—a meeting-house, where a simple form of service grew up, which needed no priests. A layman could read aloud the law and the prophets; the psalms were sung; and exhortation was given by those who seemed able to do it. No wonder the Sabbath was more observed by the Dispersion than at Jerusalem.[23] How very great an innovation the synagogue's religion was, is not easily realized without some intimate knowledge of ancient conceptions. *Vacuam sedem et inania arcana* is the epigram of Tacitus on the Temple itself—a shrine with nothing in it and mysteries that were not there. The Judaism of the synagogue baffled the ancient world—religion with no image of a god, with no altar, no priest, and no sacrifice, was unthinkable; but in the synagogue it existed, and from the synagogue came the three living religions of today. Titus, with the practical man's failure to grasp what is alive, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple deliberately in order to extinguish Judaism. But Judaism survived the destruction of the Temple, on which since sacrifice ceased to be a real part of its religion, it no longer depended.[24]

---

[22] On the synagogues, see J. P. Peters, *Religion of Hebrews*, pp. 381-404; W. Fairweather, *Background of the Gospels*, pp. 25 ff.; I. Abrahams, *Pharisaism and the Gospels*, pp. 1 ff.; Josephus, *C. Apion*, II, 18; Luke 4:16, 20; Acts 13:15.

[23] Fairweather, *Background*, p. 10.

[24] It may be added that the Essene sect disapproved of animal sacrifice: hilo, 2:457; Josephus, *Antt.*, 18:1, 5.

To sum up, sacrifice was a language used by all men, but understood by none; no uniform interpretation could be given to it. Its meaning varied with men's thought of God. It depended on use and wont; it was maintained most strongly by those who thought least deeply on religion. The real thinkers saw that it did not touch the problem of sin at all; it had no effect on God or gods; it could not purify the conscience of man (Heb. 9:9). Sacrifice depended on the instinct that man must give God something—a natural outcome of anthropomorphism, the danger of which Plato saw. The only real value in sacrifice, whether act or metaphor, lay in the belief that somehow God and man could communicate, could be intelligible; but the clearer thinkers knew of better ways by which God and man touched each other. Sacrifice was in fact obsolete where real religion was concerned; and the stronger minds counted it immoral.

III

In dealing with the Christian religion, its ideas, and the expression given to them, the first thing is to learn the mind of Jesus himself. He was a child of the synagogue; from boyhood he had the custom of going to the synagogue (Luke 4:16), and he was more at home there than in the Temple with its grandeurs and its squalors (Matt. 21:12, 13; Mark 11:15). It would be significant if he, with his genius in religion, his insight and intuition in all that bears on God, went back from the stage of the synagogue to that of the Temple, if he fell short of the Prophets. But he does not. He, too, omits sacrifice. His teaching centers in another conception of God. "Your heavenly Father" has not to be persuaded by your gifts. No, it is the other way round; "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." All ancient ritual,

all priestly theory of sacrifice and offering, is more than ever obsolete when we hear the voice of Jesus. "Your heavenly Father" has not to be sought: he is seeking you. The good shepherd goes after the lost sheep: he does not wait for the lost sheep to find him. The wonder and the mystery of God is this, that he wants man infinitely more than man wants him, that he makes the offering to man, not man to him, that it is man, and not he, who must be reconciled.[25] The whole of the New Testament rings with that key-note of Jesus. Its writers make no suggestion that we have to reconcile God to ourselves. "Be ye reconciled to God," says Paul (II Cor. 5:20). "We love him because he first loved us," says John (I John 4:19). "Because he first loves us, afterwards he reconciles us to himself," wrote Calvin.[26] In the atmosphere of such thoughts there is no place for the blood of bulls and goats, symbol or not symbol; and historically Jesus has abolished sacrifice and banished the ideas that underlie it.

The metaphor of sacrifice is indeed found in the New Testament. It is used because it is a popular way of speech, because it is an easy symbol; and yet when one tries to define the idea of sacrifice and realizes the essence of Jesus' revelation of God, the more alien the two things become. The metaphor fails; the symbol will not do. It confuses the issues. The expression with which we started, "the Lamb of God," is peculiarly hard to grasp with any clear sense of its meaning; it suggests ideas but it eludes us. If some of us still love the old phraseology of sacrifice, it is because it has been filled with new meaning and has gathered new associations. But the new meaning is too much for the old words; the new wine bursts the old skin. The old conception of sacrifice makes our relation with God, which is so simple and so

[25] Contrast *Apocalypse of Baruch*, 84:10.
[26] Calvin, *Institutes*, II, 16:3.

beautiful in the teaching of Jesus, indistinct again; it leaves the morality of the affair uncertain and difficult. It was never dominant until the adherents of the mystery religions, the heathen, came into the Church, and brought, by sheer numbers, a conception to bear on the teaching of Jesus that was not there at the beginning. Then the wholesale adoption of the Old Testament, and the passion for matching everything in the Old with something in the New, and above all the legalism brought into the Church by converted Roman lawyers, changed the general outlook.[27] Barnabas had held sacrifice to have been a mistake from the first; but now the feeling that all religion must be in some degree sacrificial (let us beware, for the moment, of our modern meaning) begins to gain ground. At the same time current philosophical accounts of God, Neoplatonic in the main, were invading the Church, and making God remote and august as he had never been in the thought of Jesus. Old and obsolete ideas revived, and with the decline of the intellectual life of world and Church in the later Roman Empire there was little power of resistance. The acceptance of the doctrine of the literal inspiration of the Old Testament at the Reformation secured the persistence of the sacrificial idea as necessary to religion, till in the nineteenth century anthropology and criticism threw open the way for clearer thinking, and the general return to the thoughts of Jesus directed the emphasis elsewhere.

IV

But the New Testament has other accounts of the work of Jesus. The writer to the Hebrews, quoting the fortieth Psalm, contrasts two clauses, "sacrifice and offer-

[27] On all this, more fully in Chapter X.

ing and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not . . ." and "then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will"; and he insists that the second abrogates the whole scheme of sacrifices. "By which will," he continues, "we are sanctified, by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:5-10). With a clearness and definition which are not always recognized by his readers, he sweeps aside metaphor and symbol, and speaks things. "The law," he says, "had a shadow of good things to come, and not the exact image of them." One guesses that in his mind is some memory of Plato's cave with the men bound there, who see not things, not even models of them, but the shadows of models, and live prisoners in a world of shadows. The old law of sacrifice and ritual offered not even an image of the real; it was at best a shadow of an image. So he moves away from analogy to psychology, from the symbol to the person. We must try to follow him.

Jesus died, he says, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. What did he do? He identified himself with the will of God, and by so doing cast such a flood of light on it as transfigured it. He prayed in Gethsemane what he taught his disciples to pray: "Thy will be done." That lies at the heart of all Christian prayer; it is the center of the Christian life; and, suggests our writer, it is the center of the life and work of Jesus. He suggests that, in a wonderful way, a way past our grasp, Jesus and the will of God are identified, and that everything which Jesus did is brought about by that identification of himself with the will of God. There is hardly an author of the New Testament who has such a haunting sense of what it cost Jesus—prayer, suffering, temptation, agony, and, as he says, strong crying. We do not easily grasp the reality and the range of his sacrifice of himself. "He learnt by what he suffered" (Heb. 5:8),

we read, and we think of Greek tragedy and its interpretations of suffering, and we remember the width of culture of our author. He has got clear away from the world of shadows into the region of fact and experience, into the inner life of Jesus, the very being of God. If we fail here and do not get things clear, it is because we are not deep enough, or true enough, or enough Christian, to see and to speak of things like this; but let us try to see what he means.

When he speaks of the will of God, he means substantially what we should call the nature of God. The will is the expression of the real, the deepest, nature. It is God at the most definite, the most essential. The writer suggests, then, that Jesus and the will of God interpret each other; that in Jesus, in his life and mind and death, we read the mind and life of God, the will and nature of God; that in Jesus God is made intelligible to us and becomes our own, ours because we see and understand. Roberts Browning says in his *Fra Lippo:*

"We're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see."

The interpretation calls our attention to the thing, and changes our feeling; it ceases to be foreign to us. Men had known the will of God, as they called it, but they had not loved it. They saw it from without; they conceived of God as a hard, alien, external force, and they shuddered and shrank from him. They had no point of approach, and he remained inscrutable; and the very fact of his being unintelligible made him awful. The arbitrariness of God haunted their minds with terror; it was indeed the source of the fear that drove them to sacrifice beasts to God, yes, and their own children; it was a thing of horror and pain. But Jesus takes the

will of God, and interprets it, and makes it, with all its mystery, a new thing: he brings us to see it in the light of his own experience. He teaches us to find in God's nature something akin to his own nature, something, therefore, that we can accept and trust, and by-and-by may love. If we may again use Plato's parable of the cave, Jesus has brought us out in the open air, where we no longer have to be content with shadows of images, but we see things in the sunshine of God. We have our faces turned the other way altogether; we are in the atmosphere of God; and when your eyes adjust themselves a little to the new blaze of light, we look more and more into the reality of things. The writer to the Hebrews, in a later chapter, puts it that Jesus has brought us into the very presence of God (10:19, with 9:24).

In the ancient religions of sacrifice, men put themselves right with God by bargain, and gift, by getting safely away from God, by inducing God to go away from them, or alternatively, by sharing with God a meal, at first merely physical and later on magical, which allowed the sensation of a semi-physical union with God. Jesus has done the thing by bringing us nearer than ever before to God, into the very heart and mind of God. It makes all life utterly different. It means rethinking all moral and religious ideas in a full view of God as he is, and working everything out on the lines of the heavenly Father's nature as interpreted by Jesus in his life and, above all, in his death. A new life, a new world, new men and women, the taking away of sin—all was made possible by the work of Jesus, by his intense unity with God, by the evidence of this given to us in his death. Old modes of religious thought ceased to be possible for men who had any real experience of Jesus; the traditional paled before the real; the shadows fled.

As the death of Jesus grows in significance, men are driven again and again to ask who he was, that he should achieve so great a change in the relations of God and man. The question is a great one; it is not to be solved till we know in some inward way something of the mystery of the identity of his mind with God's mind, till we realize the outcome of it all in the history of man, and, above all, till we know for ourselves the love of Jesus. Men speak easily of the love of Jesus; but we do not deeply know it. How could we? How far does the untrained eye see the wonder of anything? How can we, with our coldness of heart, our hardness and triviality, understand the love of Jesus? But it touches us, and it has touched mankind; and it becomes intelligible to man in that death, in which Jesus identified himself with the will of God. The love of Jesus and the will of God lighting each other up—that has been the essence of the Gospel. A modern German Jew has said that suffering is a language that everybody understands; the poorest intellect knows some of its meaning, the highest and the clearest has still something to learn of it. That is the language that Jesus used, and we understand him there without a commentary. Jesus shows us that it is also the language of God, that suffering is not, as the ancients alleged, and as some light-hearted moderns also say, alien to God, but something peculiarly God's own, that the cross instead of being, as the early anti-Christian controversialists urged, the very antithesis of God's nature, is in the very heart of God somewhere. So God also becomes intelligible to men in the cross; his will becomes something we can grasp and understand and approve, something that we can obey with joy, something that changes the values of life.

The statement, attributed by the Fourth Gospel to John the Baptist, that "the Lamb of God taketh away

the sin of the world" has historically been justified. There is plenty of sin in the world today; but we have only to read history to realize the disappearance of a great deal of sin, public and private. There were forms of sin, which, as men lived themselves into the meaning of the death of Jesus, they would have no more. A society, more and more penetrated by the intelligence of Jesus, could not endure to have slavery continue; the atrocious usage of women went; the killing of babies went; and many other like things have gone, and the rest will go.[28] For today, where the will of God, as interpreted by Jesus, is real, where people have come near to Jesus, they catch his Spirit and see things as he sees them; they grow conscious of the call to a higher level; they become sensitive to the suffering of others; they find themselves involved in a great change of life, a thorough rethinking of the principles on which they live—a change swift, impulsive, and instinctive in some, slow, deliberate, and carefully thought out in others; but real in both. It means sin taken out of men's lives, new principles of living given, and a new motive in life, a new passion; a new power, a new life—God in short. It is all associated with the realization of Jesus. What the old religion, with its clumsy and vague attempts to reach God, could not do, has been done in human experience by Jesus.

It is not out of the way, then, that the Apocalypse pictures the victorious Christ as the Lamb slain, and again and again associates his victory over sin and evil with his death, and to his death ascribes the purity and beauty of all the white-robed souls that he has redeemed.

[28] This matter will be resumed in Chapter XIII.

CHAPTER V

THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

Luther once said that the forgiveness of sin is *nodus Deo vindice dignus,* a knot that it needs a God's help to unravel. Whether we consider forgiveness as a practical or as an intellectual problem, he was right. As with other matters of real import the difficulties only unfold themselves when we try to solve them; at the first blush most things that matter are simpler than we find them on closer acquaintance. If sin and its forgiveness occupy a far less place in contemporary thinking than they once did, it is perhaps as much due to shallowness as to sanity. To neglect one's bodily health is not much wiser than to fidget about it; quiet thinking about health or sin never hurt any man.

The poet of *Job* was a man who loved this glorious world—

"The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,
Changes, surprises—and God made it all!"

"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). Three or four hundred years after him, another poet of his race—a poet who saw cloudily and in symbol at times, and at other times with extraordinary vividness—"saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away . . . and he that sat upon the throne said, Behold! I make all things new" (Rev.

21:1, 5). Nothing but a new creation would serve; the world he had known was impossible; let it pass.

The contrast between these two views of the world sums up a great deal of human experience. With all its charm and wonder, there is something wrong with the world, and the deepest and tenderest natures have felt it most.

"Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

A close attention to humanity brings the mind at once to conduct—to conduct as the index of spirit; and men have been driven in spite of themselves to wrestle with the problem of evil.

I

It would be a long story to trace the growth of the idea of sin. The records of our race show how, in thinking of sin, men have steadily shifted from the external to the internal. In all man's thought upon life and upon society that transition is to be seen. More and more stress has been laid upon motive, upon the reactive effect of action, and upon spirit and its changes. Morality his grown more reflective, and man more self-conscious and more individual. Taboos live long, but they too are judged by reason. It has been a long, slow process; and in the end man acquits the accident and the external of his sin, and brings himself in guilty. We watch the man in Plato's *Republic* wrestling with the lust of his eyes to gaze greedily on the bodies of the criminals put to death; the fight is within him, and in anger at himself he yields to himself.[1] In the Gorgias, as we have seen,[2] Plato goes further and tells us how sin writes itself indelibly upon the soul of

[1] *Republic*, IV:439 E, 440 A. [2] Chapter II, p. 25.

the sinner. Still more significant were the contributions of Hebrew prophets and psalmists to clear thinking upon sin. If the Greek brought out that the man who sins, sins against Nature and against his own soul, the Hebrew, with his clearer conception of God's personality, grasped a still more central fact. Isaiah's vision of God is immediately followed by his confession of sin (Isaiah 6), and the words of the Psalmist are familiar:

"I know my transgressions:
And my sin is ever before me.
Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."—(Psalm 51:3, 4)

Commentators with a gust for the obvious like to point out the exaggeration in this confession, whether the psalm is David's and refers to Uriah and his wife, or whether it is a more universal story, the utterance of an unknown thinker. Exaggeration—but, in the depths of it, truth.

In the new and strange world that Alexander the Great made, the supreme teachers of the Greek world were the Stoics, and their main interest lay in ethics. Bishop Lightfoot well called their new-coined word Conscience (συνείδησις) "the crowning triumph of ethical nomenclature."[3] Another great contribution was προαίρεσις (purpose or motive). They recognized motive as the key to morality, while in the older religions, especially the Roman, emphasis fell on act. The change is revolutionary. In Judaism there is a cleavage; for some Jews sin assumed a growing importance, while on others, as we shall see, it sat lightly enough.

It is interesting to reflect on the processes by which the gains of man's knowledge have been gathered. The modern is so apt to associate religion with morality, that it is something of a shock to be told how little priest

[3] *Commentary on Philippians*, p. 301.

and cult and temple contributed to ethical progress, either in Greece or in Israel. While it may be true, as Andrew Lang urged, that in no race have religious ceremonies been unaccompanied by moral teaching, still the priest has rarely been much of a thinker, rarely a pioneer in ethics; his business passed into his soul, and his business lay with old rules, with established forms, with the practice of older days. Prophet in Israel, philosopher in Greece, were laymen, men of problems and questions—spiritual anarchists or spiritual reconstructionists, as you chose to regard them; men who cared nothing for settled thought and accepted usage, but who drove hard at fact, would have principle, and must base all on the fundamental. But long before the philosophers and the prophets whose names we know, there were others who lifted the thinking and feeling of mankind forward, men who groped their way to truth, *vita didicere magistra,* felt the pressure of life and built their laws out of experience. These men, slow-thinking, but very sure, were the fathers of the philosophers, their brothers and their best disciples.

But, valid and beyond price as the contributions of Plato and the Stoics were, and the contributions of Prophet and Psalmist, a great deal was left to achieve. They settled a great many points. Sin is violation of Nature's laws; it is more damaging to the sinner than to his victim;[4] it is at last rebellion against God. So much was gained, and remains gained; Isaiah and Plato have much to say to the most modern of us; they are not superseded. But Jesus transformed the whole situation by revealing the character and personality of God and by bringing into the range of discussion a man's neighbor and society at large, as the immediate interests of God. He did this partly by what he said, a great deal

[4] Plato, *Crito,* 49.

more by what he was. "To overlook or to underrate the influence which has been exercised upon moral development by great personalities has been a too frequent tendency of philosophical Ethics."[5] Personality itself has again and again been the revelation that has superseded tradition. The Cross was a stimulus to rethink sin; and it remains so. The teaching of Jesus made previous thinkers seem shallow; they had handled far too easily the relation of man to God; their morality, sound and true to Nature as far as it went, was not thought out deeply enough; their psychology—this is a bold thing to say, when one remembers to whom one is referring—was not sufficient, too many factors were lost. But the Cross carried things further; it became in itself the source of "conviction of sin"; men by it saw further into the love of God and into the meaning of their own sin than ever before. Put into modern terms, clumsy and ugly enough, sin is the exploitation of man, the using of the gifts of God against God, the negation of God, the repudiation *in toto* of God's love, of the personal, throbbing, fathomless Fatherhood of that God whom Jesus revealed. "Sin," as Neville Talbot has put it, "sin, as the wilful devotion to self of those who are made for Another and for others, is the central and root tragedy of life."

If we are to discuss the forgiveness of sin, we have to be clear with ourselves as to what we mean both by sin and by forgiveness. If Bernard Shaw tells us bluntly that there is no forgiveness of sin, while the early creed will have us say daily: "I believe . . . the forgiveness of sins," supposing that the playwright and the early theologian mean the same thing, it is plain that they are contradicting each other. That is possibly Mr. Shaw's intention. The matter is not settled by either of them,

[5] Hastings Rashdall, *Conscience and Christ*, p. 21.

nor would it be if they agreed or thought they agreed. What does forgiveness imply? How much of sin can be forgiven? Do we distinguish between sin and sins? What should forgiveness effect, then, if we do so distinguish?

II

We may begin by considering three aspects of sin which can be readily recognized. If sin is primarily a record, can that record be deleted? But it is never merely a record; there is also what St. Augustine called "the violence of habit";[6] can a habit be "forgiven," or would it be altered if it were forgiven? In the third place, apart from the record of a man's sins, and his habit of sin, a sinful act of his may have contaminated another man's springs of judgment and conduct; granted that his habit of sin may be overcome, that the record of his own acts may be somehow deleted, how can he have peace, and how can belief in justice be secure, if the influence of his act remain operative in the life of another? There are at least three problems here, none of them easy.

First, then, the record. Men are always haunted by the consciousness that a thing done remains done. However much they repent, however pure and great and valuable their lives have become—"Well, he *was* in prison for forgery, and she *did* have an illegitimate child; there is no getting past that; those things cannot be undone." So the commonplace always think, inside the Church and out of it. So, too, say the religious teachers, the hymn-writers—

---

[6] Augustine, *Confessions*, viii:5, 12: *"Lex enim peccati est violentia consuetudinis qua trahitur et tenetur etiam invitus animus, eo merito quo in eam illabitur."*

"Liber scriptus proferetur."

So, too, the Bible, "The dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works (Rev. 20:12).[7] So, too, says conscience.[8] Actions, deeds, are done and remain. Memory cannot abolish itself; remorse is there, furious resentment against oneself for the folly that led to sin against oneself, that robbed oneself of the clean page and the pleasure which the clean page means. Remorse is essentially self-centered; it has little relation to others. Where God comes into the reckoning, there is an added horror, a sense very native to the human mind that the record has alienated God. If remorse is impersonal and does not regard others, this is very personal; God has been turned into an enemy. By now, if time makes an interpretation valid, the Christian Church has said this often enough; but it is not historically the view of Jesus, it is one of the ideas he died to abolish.

If the unthinking forgive sin easily, the thoughtful do not; they reckon hardly with themselves. Even if "the full and self-consistent concept of sin" implies, as Dr. Tennant says, knowledge, will, and intention—if without these, it be not sin—still ignorant acts involve consequences; ignorance traps a man into disease physically; and morally—? Greek tragedy shows, painfully enough, that in a great man's estimate of his record and of himself, his ignorant action counts. Human law will not admit the plea of ignorance; Nature's law does not admit it; will God's law allow it? Does a deep-going man forgive himself his own ignorance? What right has he to be ignorant? The child dies, because the mother

[7] The simile is in Daniel 7:10; and in other apocalyptic books. It occurred independently to the Greeks, some of whom ridiculed it—Zeus would not have material for books enough; Euripides, *Melanippe*, fr. 506, Nauck.

[8] Cf. Wisdom, 17:11; if the text is right.

did not know; "I ought to have known," she says, and she is right; the child was given to her that she might know for it. But it is an insufficient view of sin that emphasizes the deed, and it means loss of proportion. The motive is of more import; it is more real and more formative.

Second we set the "violence of habit." Motive, attitude, taste, make instinct, and instinct gives a turn to habit and that to character. It was remarked in antiquity, and Burns among others of modern times has also remarked, that one effect of sin is a change of character. "Each one of us," said the Hebrew, "has been the Adam of his own soul."[9] "Whatever the mental pictures you often make, to that color your mind (διάνοια) comes; the mind is dyed by its pictures," writes Marcus Aurelius (V:16). And Burns:

> "But, oh, it hardens all within
> And petrifies the feeling."

R. L. Stevenson in his Christmas sermon spoke of the danger of defiling the imagination. The New Testament abounds with similar observations; St. Paul has a series of metaphors all drawn from the physical senses—"the heart darkened" (Rom. 1:21) and "darkened in mind" (διάνοια, Eph. 4:18); the mind and the conscience stained (Titus 1:15), and the conscience cauterized (I Tim. 4:2). Cumulatively the pictures suggest a mind cut off from reality—all the channels of communication blocked, and all that is transmitted falsified in the process; the whole is summed up in a striking phrase, νοῦς ἀδόκιμος (Rom. 1:28), a mind unfit for its proper functions. "This is the condemnation," writes John (3:19), "that men love darkness rather than light." Much has been said and

[9] *Apocalypse of Baruch*, 54:19.

written in our days of the subconscious mind and of the subliminal self, and it is remarked how ideas or at least impressions can be stored in that subconscious mind, which are never lost but, after years of utter forgetfulness, may be somehow flung into the conscious mind, vivid, horrible, and defiling. There are no "dead selves," they are living in death, potent and septic. So far modern analysis supports the insight of Jesus that from within comes what defiles a man (Mark 7:15). There is no horror like that of the mind finding in odd moments of self-discovery what it has made of itself, learning in awful revelations what things memory and imagination can accumulate for its perversion. Bunyan pictures the Pilgrim in the Valley of the Shadow of Death hearing fiends whisper blasphemies in his ears and supposing the voice of evil to be his own thought. If Bunyan says explicitly that the voice came from without, the modern psychologist is not so certain. It is experience that between impulse and act there is an interval in which inhibition may be effective, but that with surrender to evil that interval becomes shorter and shorter. A man may come at last to be the prey of his own past, a creature of reflex actions, for which, however, he is himself responsible, even if by now they are involuntary and repulsive to himself, the regular victim of a habit which he developed by surrender to it.[10] A man is responsible for what he has made of his own mind and personality; but the vital question is, What can undo what he has done?

In the third place, sin was long ago compared to disease by Plato (in the *Gorgias*). The comparison is illuminating, and it was used in passing by Jesus. But if a man

---

[10] R. L. Stevenson in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* draws the picture of Jekyll waking and seeing with horror the hand of Edward Hyde on the bed; "I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde. How was this to be explained?" Readers will, perhaps, associate odd revivals of the forgotten with the moment of waking.

is to be pitied for a disease from which he suffers, two questions arise: How did he incur it, and has he transmitted it? What are we to make of the effects of our characters in the lives and minds and personalities of others? If a man of great gifts neglects or misuses them as a result of my influence, if he turns them into instruments of corruption, what becomes of that other lost soul and its powers, used for evil, even if mine is recovered for God and man? Forgiveness, if it is to be real and complete, has surely to cover this third aspect of sin.

III

Many methods have been tried to meet the case of sin. Neglect of it as negligible has been suggested as if it were as good a course as any. Sir Oliver Lodge has said, apparently with some satisfaction, that the modern man has not time to think about his sins.[11] If sin is a serious thing at all, it is a pity the modern man should be so short of time. Much stress was laid in antiquity, and some since then, on moral endeavor. The Stoic sage bade a man examine himself, confess his sins to his conscience, forgive them, and then do better.[12] Jewish legalism reached a similar result. But everything here depends on a man's conception of God and of God's standards; if it is not very high, he may easily satisfy himself; but if it be a high one, if it be continually expanded with new glimpses of God, then new visions of duty break in upon him, and he concludes, sometimes in blank despair:

> "Not the labors of my hands
> Can fulfil Thy law's demands."

[11] Quoted by Rashdall, *Conscience and Christ*, p. 130.
[12] Seneca, *De Ira*, 3:36, 1-4; Epictetus, *D.* 3:10.

In any case endeavor in the present could not undo the past. The Stoic quite frankly despaired of some people. "Natta," said the young Stoic poet, "is stupid with vice; his heart is overgrown with fat; he feels no reproach; he knows not what he is losing."[13] "What is to be done," asked Epictetus,[14] "if a man be hardened to stone?" In Judaism Paul shows how despair overtook men who gave themselves to the endeavor to build up their own righteousness (Phil. 3:6, 9) and were serious about it—"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this death?" (Rom. 7:24). Paul also speaks of God "giving up" men to the reprobate mind (Rom. 1:28) and evil passions, though this does not necessarily imply finality. Celsus has little hope of quite mending those who "sin by nature and sin by habit."[15] But can despair be a right conclusion in God's universe? Here again all turns on our conception of God. Expiation is another means of dealing with sin, which depends on the same conception. It at least contains a recognition of the principle of justice, and assigns a meaning to punishment. Punishment has been held to reveal the nature of what is punished; in this case it is education, and we exclude the unjust and devilish idea of it as mere vengeance. But if one is not careful, the very means taken to do away with sin may strengthen its hold; expiation may itself be immoral or not sufficiently moral, at any rate as regards the chain of influence set in movement by sin, unless God is really recognized in the whole transaction for what he is. How can a man make reparation to God, if he has not a proper recognition of God's nature? Still more, how can he, if he has? It was suggested, as we saw, in Plato's *Republic* that some people even reckoned on mak-

[13] Persius 3:32.
[14] Epictetus, *D.*, 1:5.
[15] Origen, *c. Celsum*, 3:65.

ing friends of the gods out of the spoils of injustice.

Judaism developed another idea, valid and fundamental if properly conceived, repentance. "There is nothing about repentance in Aristotle, not very much in Plato; more no doubt in the teaching of the Stoics, though the proud self-sufficiency of that school hardly favors a penitential attitude of mind."[16] The absence of any definite and operative conviction of God's personality probably explains the slight interest of the Greek in repentance.[17] Among the Jews we find the doctrine taking different forms. Mr. Claude Montefiore, in his book *Pharisaism and St. Paul*, explains the standpoint of the Rabbinic Jew, using documents of a rather later date than Paul's period, but assuring us that we may safely use them to reconstruct Paul's *milieu*.[18] A few quotations will make it plain. Rabbinic Judaism was "a happy, spiritual and even ardent religion" of the "healthy-minded" (p. 48). "The Rabbinic Jew . . . took a practical view of the situation" (p. 40); "the law had been given for life . . . [It] is not in one sense too hard for him. There is no commandment which he cannot fulfil more or less" (p. 41). "Yes, God . . . is very angry," but "let a man repent but a very little and God will forgive very much" (p. 42). "The average and decent-living Israelite would inherit the world to come, would be 'saved'" (p. 35). "God's love for Israel, his love of the repentant sinner, his inveterate tendency to forgiveness,[19] together with the merits of the patriarchs,[20] would

---

[16] Rashdall, *Conscience and Christ*, p. 129.

[17] Perhaps it is not fanciful to see in the Greek term for sin (ἁμαρτία, "missing" the mark) another suggestion of this idea that sin hardly concerns God.

[18] Confirmation is to be found in some of the Apocalyptic books. Cf. R. H. Charles, *Apocalypse of Baruch*, p. 81 ff.

[19] Compare a beautiful passage in Wisdom 11:23-26.

[20] Cf. *Apocalypse of Baruch*, 84:10. "Pray . . . that the Mighty One may be reconciled to you and that He may not reckon the multitude of your sins, but remember the rectitude of your others." Cf. *ib.* 14:7, 12, "a store of works."

amply make up for their own individual deficiencies. Their religion was therefore happy and hopeful" (p. 36). "Salvation was the privilege of every Israelite, who, believing in God and in his law, tried to do his best and was sorry for his failures and lapses" (pp. 77, 78). The God of the Rabbis was "very personal and childlike. He did not care for system and theories, but he was always there when wanted" (p. 95);[21] his people, too, had "little philosophy" (p. 79).

There was another type of Judaism which has historically had more influence, the Judaism of the Dispersion, of men battling more nakedly with the world, with paganism, and with the higher thought of the Greeks. Mr. Montefiore finds it "inferior" (p. 93), "more anxious and pessimistic, more sombre and perplexed" (p. 114). It had suffered from contact with the Greek spirit, and "began to invent theories and justifications of its religion instead of accepting it as a delightful matter of course" (p. 96). "Directly you have to justify a thing, it becomes a little external. . . . If you accept . . . as a matter of course, you love it without asking why" (p. 99). So the Jew of the Dispersion was "more theoretic and systematic, but his outlook on life was less accurate and less sensible" (p. 96).

I have given Mr. Montefiore's own words, because I do not wish to misrepresent, and because he is the expert and I am not. But the impression they leave on my mind is not quite what he intends. The *naiveté* of the Rabbinic Jew does not seem to me a higher thing than the more difficult and reflective religion of the Dispersion. It is too like the common sense and the simplicity which we find in other fields and there recognize to be the result of mere inattention. Paul's religion was, as Mr. Monte-

[21] See Oesterley and Box, *Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, pp. 391-403, on the Day of Atonement.

fiore says, quite different from that which he describes; but surely it was not of a lower type, unless the philosopher, who aims with Plato at the "contemplation of all time and of all existence,"[22] is inferior to the man who has not begun to think or who has abruptly dropped the habit. Things are not simple in God's universe. To be unconscious of difficulties is not to be above them. If this is to defy the common sense of the "man in the street," I cannot help it. In any case, Rabbinic Judaism did not, historically, capture the world; it did not hold the reflective Jews of the Dispersion; and the reason is not far to seek—it managed everything too easily, "healed the hurt of the daughter of my people lightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."[23]

IV

Jesus is reported by the Fourth Gospel to have said that the Holy Spirit would convince the world of sin (16:9). Rabbinic Judaism did no such thing. Superstitious and magical as they largely were, the mystery-cults of the heathen were nearer the truth about sin. Jesus with the Rabbis emphasized repentance, but he touched nothing that he did not deepen. He gave men a new clue to the force and meaning of sin; he brought them to a new sense of repentance. Repentance, as Luther saw when he began in earnest the study of Greek, means above all things "rethinking." A man must have some idea of what his sin means to God, of what it means in the human *milieu*. In order to do this, he must have some conviction of God. The knowledge of God will be more fully dealt with in the next chapter. It is enough here to recall how Jesus re-created the very idea of God for men, and this made possible a real re-

[22] *Republic*, VI:486 a.
[23] Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11.

thinking of life and conduct. The cross gave men a new object-lesson in the nature of sin and the outcome of it, showed it in its hideousness, for the cruel, vulgar, and negative thing it is. Some realization of God, his law, his nature, has always been the prelude of repentance properly so named, though it is also true that penitence in its fullness is a Christian grace, which grows by knowledge of Jesus.

But our problem is the work of Jesus in dealing with sin, and we shall do best to follow the lines laid down already. How has Jesus affected the mind of mankind with regard to the record, the habit, and the influence of sin?

First, once more, the record. Something is needed, as the writer to the Hebrews says, that "will clean your conscience." It is conscience that makes cowards of us all; if conscience blushes, Tertullian said, prayer blushes too.[24] There is no coming to God, if conscience says we shall not be welcome. It is a question of balance, or perspective, as we like to put it. There stands the record; we conclude that it is intolerable to God, that it alienates God. Jesus distinguishes; he brought out the hatefulness of sin to God, he never minimized it, his Passion emphasized it; but he put in the center of his teaching his conviction that sin does not alienate God from the child whom he loves. As we have seen already,[25] Jesus always takes the line that the Father wants his son above all things. The prodigal wastes the old man's substance in the strange land; but it is not the substance (nor an I.O.U. for it) that the old man wants; he wants his boy, because he is his boy and needs a father's care and love. Jesus never suggests that he is effecting any change in moral law, any dislocation, legal fiction, or dodge of any kind. His emphasis is not on acts done, on guilt or on

[24] Tertullian, *De exhort. castitatis*, 10. [25] Chapter IV, p. 64.

penalty incurred; it is not on law, nor on God's majesty and the vindication of majesty and law; he does not deny or in reality obscure these things, but for him the matter of first significance is the love of God.

The record remains, but the sting is taken out of it; the forgiven son leaves off thinking of his record,[26] he is more impressed by his father's feeling for him, and if he thinks of the record, it becomes itself of new value for it enhances the wonder of his reception. "To anyone who really experiences it," says Herrmann,[27] "forgiveness comes not as a matter of course, but as an astounding revelation of love." (The contrast here with the ideas of the Rabbinic Jew as set forth by his advocate is patent, and it is significant). Christ, as Zwingli saw, sets men free from the sense of condemnation by revealing not only the divine justice and horror of sin, but also the divine mercy and love; he removes the barrier which prevents God and man from falling into each other's arms.[28] The barrier is of man's building, the honest structure that conscience builds as a prison about him; but conscience too needs educating and pitches the love of God too low. Jesus changes that; he is himself the guarantee for God, the pledge of God's love. The consequence is a great change of mind in the man. He moves over to God's point of view. He no longer wishes to escape the consequences of his actions. If the Father of Jesus makes a law, the man will now wish at all costs to maintain it, he will cooperate to the extent of wishing to bear the penalty that his Father thinks helpful to him and to others. But is this forgiveness? If the penalty is still to be borne? But what *is* the penalty, when

---

[26] Cf. Luther: "If thou wilt confess sin, then have a care that thou lookest and thinkest far more on thy future life than on thy past life." Herrmann, *Communion of Christian with God*, p. 255.

[27] Herrmann, *ib.*, p. 251.

[28] See A. V. G. Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought*, pp. 289-290.

once there is reconciliation? Is it a punishment if you *wish* it? Let him do what he will! The crop sown has to be reaped; but Another will help in the reaping; and it is something to work along with such a Friend even in so painful and humiliating a task. And it is man's experience that in this work, as in all work done for God and with God, the great Friend does the larger part. If Jesus is right about God, punishment is not vindictive; it is remedial,[29] and justice *is* love. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."[30] When one grasps the inwardness of Christian thought and experience here, the language used so often in the past about one's own righteousness being filthy rags[31] becomes quickly intelligible; Zinzendorf, following Paul and John, is right, when we understand what he means:

"Jesu, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head."

We may very well use other words and other symbols; but he too has caught the truth. The cross has lit up the real nature of God; the love that chose it becomes the supreme thing; the record is not ignored, but its paralyzing effect is gone; the conscience is set free to enjoy God and all his dealings. Rothe, as rendered by John Wesley, sums up the experience:

"O love, thou bottomless abyss!
My sins are swallowed up in thee;
Covered is my unrighteousness,
Nor spot of guilt remains in me,
While Jesu's blood through earth and skies
Mercy, free boundless mercy, cries."

[29] Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, 6:6, 46: "The punishments of God are saving and educative"; referring to the punishment of the dead. [30] Job 13:15 (A.V.). [31] Cf. Isaiah 64:6 (A.V.).

Secondly, the power of sin. During the long European war, and especially towards its end, all the world realized, as Napoleon had said, that *morale* is everything. Spirit is the source of victory. Jesus, as we have seen, floods the human soul with an intense conviction of the love of God; and the man shouts in sheer joy: "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 13). This has been put in a variety of ways, all pointing to the same experience. Dr. Chalmers spoke of "the expulsive power of a new affection," an illustration from human life which goes a long way. "Every one who knows what it is to be forgiven," wrote Dr. Denney, "knows also that forgiveness is the greatest regenerative force in the life of man."[32] "The spirit of life in Christ," said Paul (and we had better take pains to give the real value to the words he chose), "set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8: 2). Charles Wesley says the same, as forcibly:

> "He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
> He sets the prisoner free."

St. Augustine gives a further hint. We love more, he says, a possession that we have lost and found again than if we had never lost it.[33] A new tie of common experience binds the good shepherd to the sheep he has found, and would bind the sheep to the shepherd if sheep were susceptible of such feelings. Men transcend sheep here; memory gives a new motive, and the common experience of which Christ and the soul share the secret has a power of transmuting the *minus* to a *plus*, with a force that overcomes the reflex of habit. As for the subliminal self and its power of storing dead selves with their horrible reminders and influences, the Author of the sub-

[32] Denney, *Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 6.
[33] Augustine, *Confessions*, VIII:3, 7.

liminal self may be trusted to purify that self also; for the idea that God leaves things half done has never found acceptance with real thinkers. Christ will descend into that hell at least, whatever we say about the Apostles' Creed; and when he has made it full of himself, what it throws up into the conscious may be trusted to be sweet and wholesome. Human love has this effect—changing the innermost character and instincts and storing impulses for good.

All this, be it noted, is not conjecture; it is the experience men have had of Jesus, interpreted soberly, if joyfully, in language as near the fact as they could bring it. If the language has the surge and swing about it of "joy unspeakable and full of glory," that is always the mark of real experience, new and startling; and it confirms the Christian story, that men should find it unspeakable. Historically, men have found the power of habit overcome and the nature transformed by Jesus Christ—instinct and impulse as much changed as mind and heart, a rebirth of the whole being. What forgiveness could be without this, it is hard to see; it must be this, or it is nothing; and Christian experience is solid on the reality of this change.

In the third place, the influence of sin upon others—in some ways the hardest aspect of the matter. A man submits himself to Christ, is reborn, remade, or whatever our phrase be to describe the amazing extent of the change; but the woman he seduced, or the son whom he tainted with low moral standards, what of them? Can he

"Let the wretch go festering through Florence,"

and be at peace with God? The act is beyond recall; the innocent suffer or are defiled; how can there be "peace

with God," would it not be damnable insensibility? There are two lines of reply. It is a consideration to be remembered, that a man is responsible for his influence, but not wholly for another's reception of it. The great quack of the last days of the French monarchy took in all sorts of persons, but, as Carlyle points out, Cagliostro failed with thoroughly honest people. If the woman or the son, whom we have imagined, had been thoroughly sound, the bad influence would have been turned aside. The man is responsible for the effects of his influence, which are serious enough, but not for another man or woman's self-determination. The other person is never merely wax; he, too, or she, has a responsibility. But, put things at the very worst, the problem will be best decided by reference to the Christian experience of Jesus. "It is simply not true," says Dr. D. S. Cairns, "to speak of the irreparable past, and not well to dwell upon it. Go deeper and take God into account. It is part of his omnipotence that he can retrieve it. The story is not finished yet. Those who believe in God believe in a retrieving future." Thus it all comes back once again to that conviction of God which Jesus has brought into human experience. Jesus was after all the friend of men, clear-sighted beyond the best of us; was he going to leave men unhealed just when the healing mattered most to themselves and to others? To think so is to miss the reality of his nature.

Finally, we have to remember that the holiness, which Jesus gives to character, is not a negative thing of taboos, "a fugitive and cloistered virtue," in Milton's fine phrase, that "slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." He has given us another conception of holiness, as a positive and redemptive thing that seeks the contact of sinful men, that faces dust and heat, temptation, agony, and the cross

itself—something functional and reproductive, no "treasure in a napkin" buried and sterile, but seed sown and growing and bearing a hundredfold, the most prolific and living thing imaginable. To venture on a modern simile, it is more like chlorine than blotting-paper.

It is thus that Jesus has dealt with sin. He gave it an importance it had never had before; he brought out its meaning; he got it into the light of God's face. But he also brought men to look on God's face. "We have peace with God," says Paul (Rom. 5:1); it is historically true, and the way of it and the results of it deserve attention. The man who is at peace with God is no longer resentful of God's action, whatever form it take. He no longer tries to protect himself against God. As in a human friendship a man drops habits of criticism and self-protection, and absorbs his friend, so the man "at peace with God" opens his heart, consciously and, perhaps still more, unconsciously to God. It is not till then that God's personality can make itself felt.

The result in the growth of mind and character cannot be hid. Of such growth the Christian Church can show abundant evidence, both in individuals and in the society they make. So that we are justified in concluding that there has been some real and effective treatment of sin, that men have been set free from it, and have a new life in God—in short, that Jesus has reconciled men to God, that he has solved the problem of forgiveness, and that the solution is "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39).

CHAPTER VI

THE REVELATION OF GOD

Tantum Deus cognoscitur quantum diligitur.
—Bernard of Clairvaux.

In the long history of religion with all its cross-currents and backwaters, the windings of the stream, and the great barren expanses of shale and sand where no water is, it is possible with care to mark a direction and a progress. Certain things emerge from close study which it is impossible to mistake and which gain significance as we reflect upon them.

Man, it has been said, is incurably religious, and the explanation is given by Plato—"the unexamined life is not livable for a human being."[1] He is bound by something implanted in him to reflect upon his experience, and, while thought does not add to his experience, it so brings out the meaning of it, as to make it a new thing and to prepare the way for fresh discovery. The past becomes the present and points to the future—is the future, one might almost say, so truly

> "Old experience doth attain
> To something of prophetic strain."

I

Four tendencies may be remarked in the development of religion, not all equally strong in every race but all in some degree potent.

[1] *Apology*, 38 A.

First of all, man is driven to unify his experience. We talk of people thinking in compartments, but it is impossible to do it for very long; either the thought or the compartments must go, and with mankind at large it is thought that triumphs. Plato's ideal of "the contemplation of all time and all existence"[2] owes to him a magnificent phrasing; the ideal was latent in every living mind from the beginning—a vague date, I know, but no other is available. Probably all the great strides in thought have been connected with the unification of experience. A discovery or even a suggestion that reduces our categories, that simplifies our thinking, is always hailed as a step forward; if it prove valid, it will never be really lost. The greatest truths are those that achieve this for us most effectively, and over the largest range.

Secondly, however picturesque in long retrospect the vague cults and fears of animism may seem, animism has never given a secure foothold to thinking man. The Olympian gods of Greece were bound to overcome their predecessors. Mankind tacitly held that there is nothing in the universe greater than personality; the word is of the most modern, the faith very ancient. Men gave their gods personality; or, rather, they found themselves unable to think of their gods as less than personal. To recognize the gods as possessed of feeling, intellect, and character was a step forward—a necessary step; and where it was not taken there was no progress. Perhaps the chief value of this step forward was that it made another inevitable—to the unity of the godhead. The unthinking in Greece held for ever to vague animistic conceptions, to demons; and there was periodic reaction to them. The separate gods long held the field, but the thinkers saw beyond them. Israel and Greece took different roads at this point; Greece reached the unity of

[2] *Republic*, VI:486 A.

God more decisively than his personality; Israel, by some happy instinct or thanks to prophetic genius, grasped and kept the personality of the one God, and there lay the key to the future.

A third tendency is toward the supremacy of moral law. One of the great struggles in the fifth century B.C., the most brilliant age of Greece, was to decide whether morality were custom or nature, νόμος or φύσις. The word used for law suggested custom as the basis of morality, but experience was stronger than etymology. Human life was not a mere succcession of accidents, more or less regulated by tacit conventions; there was (in our modern sense—one cannot now escape the word) law in it, something underlying it, valid, potent, not to be escaped. If reproduction was a natural human instinct, some kind of morality was another; as real and eventually as imperious. Society rested on something deeper than conventions; if men were to be men in any true sense, theft, adultery, and murder, to name only the most obvious things, were intolerable; they ruined any real human life, they must be a denial of something natural, a refusal of the order of the universe. A long while before Plato made all this clear, men brought to bear upon the gods their conviction of the supremacy of righteousness. Zeus, as Æschylus saw, stands for law, inevitable, universal, and intelligible to man. "If gods do deeds of shame, the less gods they," says one of Euripides' characters. These two great poets do but sum up and bring to expression what had long been working in the Greek mind and what was to discredit their pantheon. The Hebrew moved, perhaps more conspicuously but hardly more certainly, in the same direction. Righteousness becomes the central conception for all true thought upon man's life and upon the being of God.

In the fourth place, man came to realize intensively the significance of his own personality. A large part of Greek history may be summed up as a series of experiments, by which the individual secures recognition of himself. Politically it became more and more obvious how much he meant; Greek history was made and unmade in a degree beyond anything we know in the West by men amazingly, even desperately, individual and unmistakable. Greek philosophy is the outcome of the individual man's determination to do his own thinking himself, and be done with his neighbor and his grandfather. In religion it is the same. The Greek made up his mind that he must be immortal.[8] It is this glorious assertion of personality, with the glad acceptance of the duties that go with it, that made the Greek the world's teacher. Strange as it seems, he had to teach the Hebrew the doctrine of personal immortality.

These four tendencies are to be traced through the history of all religion. They have their fates, of course; here one is over-emphasized and another lost. But a survey of the whole field confirms us in the conviction not only of their validity but of their vitality. Where one or other of these tendencies is repressed, religion suffers. Men's convictions as to the nature of God control the fates of races and empires; they are the most potent things mankind has. A doctrine of God that ignores his unity, his personality, or my personality, or the righteousness that must govern us both, leads to disaster. Any doctrine, further, that suggests contempt or even inattention towards any real feature in God or man, fails to endure, or, if it endures, the human race suffers for it. My personality includes feeling and reason, the instinct for wife and child and state, an imperious demand for

[8] Plutarch, who sometimes hits off (or borrows) a good phrase, says, "The hope of immortality and the passion to be is of all our loves oldest and greatest." (*Non Suaviter*, 1104 c.).

an ever larger life, for a richer development of nature and character—that is what the Greek teaches us, and we know by now that he is right; and any religion which denies me any of these claims will produce a poorer type of mankind, a lie of some sort, and not the true thing. And further, before we pass on, when the modern man —at his simplest, as we may lightly say—is overheard asking: "How can I be right with God?" the question embodies the four great tendencies we have been discussing; it recognizes God and his *ego* as paramount, acting together in a single sphere, and both recognizing Right as their common ground. History itself is a record of man's endeavor to "get right with God," to find out God's meaning for human life and to adjust society to it.[4]

II

But, as Plato says, "the Father and Maker of this whole it is hard to find, and when one has found him to declare him to all is impossible."[5] That a sense of strangeness and foreignness lies like a fog across the entrance of the divine country, a certain wonder whether a mere man has any business there, an unreality about it all, is the moving confession of a modern thinker.[6] God is so manifold that it is hard to be sure that one has the whole of him. His ideas man only slowly gathers; some easily, as those about gravitation and by and by those about fire, and later and with less ease those about germs (let us say) and electricity; but his more fundamental thoughts are more deeply hidden and only to be

[4] The influence of the Stoic "Law of Nature" on the development of Roman law is only one obvious illustration.

[5] *Timaeus*, 29 C.; cf. Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 68, and Celsus, *Orig, c. Cels.* 7: 42, who quote the passage from very different angles and in very different tempers.

[6] Phillips Brooks, *The Light of the World*, p. 6.

reached by longer and more painful experience and thought more long and painful still.[7] And man is impatient of the lingering processes of thought. The philosophers are so slow, and life so short; one must have an effective relation with God, and there are other teachers who do not for ever tell us to wait and see; they act and achieve—at least they say so. A great cleavage comes in men's progress; these go to the right, moving slowly and stumblingly, checking their movements and their discoveries, halting and retracing their steps again and again; those go gaily and confidently to the left, happy in their freedom from doubt, happy in their activity and their sensations; and mankind is indebted to both—though to which the more, we may not so readily agree.

Must we *know* God before we can have relations with Godhead? The Graeco-Roman world was divided on this question. The philosophers were uncertain and slow, not clear about God's personality, stronger on his unity, far from precise about our consciousness of relation with him. "He is not far from any one of you," they said; they even spoke of a holy spirit within you;[8] but then it was not clear once more, whether they meant spirit or breath, a divine indwelling in the soul, or a divine creation of the soul from some fragment of itself (*divinae particulam aurae*).[9] There was, they said, a great Something beyond, the soul of the world (*anima mundi*) perhaps, or Something further away still, "beyond being."[10] But how is one to have contact with that? In him we live and move and have our being; his laws condition our life:

---

[7] Hence perhaps the famous saying of Heraclitus (c. 600 B.C.) that "a hidden harmony is better than one obvious."

[8] So Seneca, *Ep.* 41, 1: *Sacer intra nos spiritus sedet.*

[9] Horace, *Satires*, 2:2, 79; cf. Epictetus, *D.*, 2:8: σὺ ἀπόσπασμα εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ.

[10] Celsus *ap.* Origen, *c. Cels.*, 7:45.

"Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee, are
fresh and strong."

For Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty* is own brother to the Hymn of Cleanthes—but younger and more poet-souled.

But there were those who were not philosophers, who resented for one thing the philosophic air ("How blest are we that are not simple men"), who were more in a hurry for peace of mind, who tired quickly of the abstract and who resented the infinite distance that philosophy put between them and their hopes, between them and God. The story of the recrudescence of cult and ritual, of superstition and magic, in the Roman Empire is a painful chapter in the history of mankind. But behind it all lay instincts that the philosophers had been forgetting. They were content with a soul, which, while they called it "a particle of God," was really no more than a little parcel of elements to be untied one day and scattered among the larger masses of those elements in the universe—in plain terms, it would be lost.[11] They emphasized the *ego* and forgot him; they urged on him infinite grandeur and failed to see that he had any needs or cravings at all, or suggested that if he had, he might better suppress them. The religious temperament was not to be satisfied so, and it became engaged in a vigorous conflict with philosophy—a battle for the reality, the immortality of the soul, for the nearness of God to man, for the conviction that intimate relation between God and the soul is the essence and heart of life. It was in vain that philosophy showed how near God comes to men in knowledge and in understanding, how the divine knowledge and the human hold converse. Men were in a hurry; they grew tired of thinking; they must feel.

[11] Seneca, *Consolation* (end).

The common man's hurry is the quack's opportunity. Hence came, as we have seen, the sects that promised speedy peace with heaven, certainty, security and enjoyment, rapt moments and the most delicious sensations of union with gods, and light upon immortality. Intuition and initiation were the watchwords. Religion was dissipated in an emotionalism that lost all sense of definition; nothing was clear, all was vague. There were (and are) those whose teaching is that that is ideal religion; but something was lost, when reason abdicated—the stern morality of the Stoic went, the clear vision of Plato, the very sense of truth.[12]

From the struggle certain results emerge. A faraway God will not do; any tampering with the reality of the soul is fatal; emotion is no guide to truth; religion without morality, morality without religion, neither will satisfy the stern and loving nature of man.

III

The Jew in the Roman Empire had after all a richer heritage in religion than the Greek. Before the days of the great prophets Israel had been clear about the personality of Jehovah. It was a gain that the syncretism, that made one Zeus of many and, by keeping all the legends of the many, made the one polygamous and non-moral generally, had no parallel in Israel's experience. Slowly, led by prophet and psalmist, Israel concentrated mind and heart on one God, "the God of the whole earth," the God of Nature, the God of history; and a monotheism grew up that was passionate.

"The lord descended from above
and bowed the heavens hie;

[12] P. Wendland, *Hell. Röm. Kultur*, p. 168, sums up this general movement as "Theosophy for the cultured, superstition the vulgar's daily bread."

And underneath his feet he cast
the darkenes of the skie;
On Cherubs and on Cherubins
ful royally he rode,
And on the wings of al the windes
came flying al abroad.

So the Elizabethan Puritan rendered the eighteenth Psalm. The hundred and fourth Psalm, the thirty-eighth chapter of Job, show alike with what feeling and poetry monotheism could clothe itself, and how Nature in its beauty becomes a revelation of God. The visions of Isaiah and the other great prophets all associate the One God with righteousness, terrible and overpowering, but eminently just and reasonable. If prayer is the final test of any real monotheism,[13] Hebrew religion alone in antiquity could stand it. The unity of all experience, the personality of the One God, the universal scope of righteousness, are the glorious contribution of Israel to the religion of mankind. Very curiously, personal immortality was only a later conviction, but in time it was achieved.

It is too late to quarrel with the forgotten scholars who organized the canon of the Old Testament, and perhaps needless, for their spiritual and their literary instincts were generally sound. The apocryphal and pseudonymous books of the last three centuries B.C. have neither the religious nor the literary value of the earlier prophets. But a great deal is lost for the student of religion who neglects them. The Jew in those difficult centuries was in the most painful contact with new situations and the new ideas that they involve. He had reached the conception of Jehovah being the God of the whole earth; but, influenced by Greek and perhaps other thinkers, he was not quite so easy about his own rela-

[13] So J. H. Moulton, *Treasure of the Magi*, p. 101.

tions with Jehovah. He recognized, more than ever before, the mind of Jehovah in the course of history; but Jehovah more and more seemed to work from a distance, to keep aloof from the world he controlled; it might be by angels,[14] it might be by his wisdom,[15] or by the Torah (his law) that he managed the affairs of men, but he in his holiness was out of their touch, almost out of their ken; even his name was not to be spoken.[16] The Septuagint shows the feeling of the age in toning down the grosser anthropomorphisms of the Hebrew bible.[17] It was with cowering awe that later Judaism regarded him —even angels "could not behold his face by reason of the magnificence and glory" (1 Enoch 14:21); but with outbursts of extraordinary assurance. The present was abominable; the position of the nation went from bad to worse; so Jewish thinkers ranged into the future. In the apocalyptic books we have their philosophy of history, their conviction that fundamental Justice is the secret of the universe, that present wrong will yet, by God's providence, issue somehow in future right. Despite a more or less Eastern dualism that begins to haunt their minds, they are so far influenced by the Greek conception of the unity of existence, reinforcing prophetic teaching. Their God is not quite the God of the prophets; he is eloquent, finicking, and imperial, he depends on Greek rhetoric as well as on spiritual truth and intuition; and, while he is universal, "hating nothing that he has made,"[18] he has a marked weakness for his own tribe. And yet this God achieves some things beyond the vision of the greater prophets; he is much more interested in

[14] It is pointed out that this idea is already in Ezekiel, but see Daniel and the Book of Jubilees for a furthur development of it. Also R. H. Charles, Enoch, index s.v. Angels.

[15] Drummond, *Philo*, 2, pp. 214 ff.; cf. II Enoch (Secrets), 30:8: "On the sixth day I commanded my Wisdom to make man of seven substances."

[16] A. B. Bruce, *Apologetics*, p. 286.

[17] W. Fairweather, *The Background of the Gospels*, p. 329.

[18] Wisdom 11:24.

the individual—"the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God," [19] and he will keep them and give them another life, a better life, with not only the consciousness of the victory of right but ocular evidence of it. A last judgment, resurrection, immortality, a Messianic intervention—the ideas are never far away in this period. Naturally they are never very distinct; men's guesses and intuitions wavered; but Jehovah would overcome Satan, and the pious believer was safe in entrusting himself to God. In this period of depressed national life, there thus rises a developed conception of personal religion, which can be traced back to the individualism of Jeremiah.[20]

When we compare the development of religion in Israel with the course it took in the Graeco-Roman world, it seems a fair conclusion from the experience of Israel that more is gained in the quest of the knowledge of God along the line of thought and intellect than by the line of cult and emotion. Emotion has its place; it may be doubtfully true that some experience of facts is only reached by means of emotion; but emotion seems a normal concomitant of the deepest experiences. Thus emotion has to be crossexamined, its evidence has to be checked, and its data corrected. Every man is born a metaphysician, and knows that emotion and intuition are amenable to the court of experience and that experience can only be interpreted by reason; though not every man will take the trouble to carry the process through. The Jew, if Mr. Montefiore's picture of him is true, grew tired of thinking out his religion and took it for granted. Meantime the Graeco-Roman world, depressed by long wars and ruined by the loss of freedom, was in a hurry for spiritual peace; it swung off from the philosophic

[19] Wisdom 3:1.
[20] J. P. Peters, *Religion of the Hebrews*, p. 441.

school to the shrine, and before long it compelled the philosophers also to come and make their peace with the gods of taboo and magic.

IV

Into such a world came Jesus, a re-creating force. He brought a new conception of God, which on examination we find to comprise all the gains made by all the world through centuries of experience. The four great features, which we have noticed in the development of religious thought, are to be found in his teaching—one world, One God and that God personal, righteousness, and the personality of man. But the difference with him lies in the value he gives to personality. Personal as the Hebrew prophets had made God, none of them dreamed of a God so intensely real, so boundlessly personal, so amazingly akin to man. The boldness and the sweep of Jesus here outrun description. The corollaries of his belief in God's personality are an entire transformation of the idea of righteousness and a new emphasis on the significance of the human soul, that, next to his belief in God, has been the most powerful thing in history.

Plato had recognized the natural affinity of God and man, their mutual intelligibility; man, he said, was made by nature to be intimate with God (οἰκείως ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν θεόν); but Plato never came near such a sense as Jesus had of God's kinship, interest, and nearness. Jesus pictures a God who loves and who enjoys the world he has made, down to the last little sparrow in a nestful, who thinks in terms of color and life and movement, and who above all else loves and enjoys the nature of man, sees through man's limitations his worth and grandeur, and cannot do without him. What teacher ever gave God so thorough and so puissant a personality? He will

have no God remote if just, still less a God beyond being: he pictures a God involved in all the tragedy of all the world, who takes and keeps the most resolute and self-sacrificing initiative, a God of energy and hope. He pictures God as the good shepherd, who seeks the lost sheep and who finds it and puts it on his shoulders with joy—God as rejoicing with all his friends in heaven over one sinner that repents—an emphasis beyond all others on man's personality.[21] Other teachers more than half hinted failure in God, his world a mistake, to be made over again, the larger part of the men (for whom he was supposed to care) utter fiascos, mere fuel for the flames of hell and nothing more to be made of them. Not so Jesus; he saw better and read the triumph of God; the leaven leavens the meal; the seed brings forth a hundredfold; the lost sheep is found; the lost son comes home, drawn by his Father's invincible and irresistible love. God never made the wondrous human soul to be "cast as rubbish to the void." *Fecisti nos ad te,* said Augustine, "Thou hast made us for thyself"; and he learnt it from Jesus, who saw that God *will* have us, that he breaks down the obstacles between man and himself, and when man is angry with him or suspicious of him reconciles him to himself. Jesus "passed by the grand classical speech of religion, which was fast becoming a dead language to the living world . . . and took up the father and mother tongue, the dialect of the human heart, and at his summons and by the transfiguring power of his personality, the name of Father became pure and great enough to describe the inmost nature of the Eternal One." [22]

Men believed the message of Jesus. He gave it partly

[21] Cf. Phillips Brooks, *The Light of the World,* p. 333. "The summons of God for men to join Him in His joy appears to open a new region of motive."

[22] D. S. Cairns, *Christianity and the Modern World,* p. 52.

in words—but such words! Words of genius full of the life and spirit of a most vital and energizing personality. The words had his life, his fire, his depth, and his happiness in them, and they were irresistible. He spoke in pictures, far more illuminating than definitions. More still, Jesus brought home to men his conviction of God by what he was. There is no describing personality; you have to touch it to know it. Genius and talent are extraordinarily alike, except that they are utterly different. "There's very little difference between one man and another," said a working man to Professor William James; "but," he added, "what there is, is very important." Genius gets outside our categories and defies even our powers of quotation and misquotation; it will not be hackneyed. Jesus is clear away beyond all our teachers. His personality leaps from the Greek text, and the Elizabethan English, despite our familiarity with them, and is alive again and charms men still into half-believing what he says, and wholly venturing upon it and finding it true.

Do men find it true? Can we use the experience of the Christian Church, if we can recapture it, to determine the truth of what he said? Let us go back a little. Let us recall the four points on which we find that man has been insisting through all his religious history. If there is not something fundamental about them, something in a deep sense true, then it is hard to find any meaning at all in the experience of mankind. We find, however, that not one of them is lost sight of without some tragic decline in the people who lose it, church or no church, some failure to keep abreast of the deep realities, some abandonment of what is essential in human nature. But where men have taken Jesus at the foot of the letter and treated him so seriously as to risk life and the soul on his veracity, we find, as the Fourth Gospel

put it, "life and life more abundantly." The test will be what Jesus has made of life, and we shall draw our evidence not from people officially wearing his uniform, as it were, and using his name, but from people who throw in their lot with him and face Gethsemane and Calvary with him. For we must remember that many ships will float in fair weather, but the storm shows their quality. How has the teaching of Jesus weathered the centuries?

Aristotle once said that in the Greek mysteries men and women were "put into a certain frame of mind," and "had feelings." A modern Anglican writer has on these grounds compared them with the sacraments. But the Christian has historically learnt to be independent of his feelings, as Bunyan did in Bedford Jail. He has somehow gained an assurance, beyond feeling,[23] that his Heavenly Father is the real figure in the story, whatever the story was—privation, prison, martyrdom, or what not, and he knows that he has "peace with God." If the next step is crucifixion, he will, in the splendid suggestion of Jesus, bring a cross with him—a magnificent extension of the principle of going an extra mile when requisitioned. Life has become full in every detail with God, rich and gracious and great.[24] There is union with God, but not the static union conceived of in Greek mysteries, but a union whose business it is

> "To read what is yet unread
> In the manuscripts of God,"

to hold communion with the Heavenly Father along the line of everything that interests him—a large programme, larger perhaps than any one before Christ,

[23] It is interesting to note the prevalence in the Fourth Gospel, commonly supposed to be more mystical than the other three, of words that emphasize thought and intellect rather than feeling; viz., the verb "to know," the nouns "light" and "truth."

[24] A later chapter (XIII) will take up this point.

except Plato perhaps, could have contemplated. Jesus has historically created this mind in men—a passion to reach God in all he does, color, movement, life and death, the sea, the stars, and the human soul.

"The pure in heart shall see God," said Jesus (Matt. 5); the impure do not see him; they do not want to see him, and they are saved from it, though not to their gain. But men convicted of sin are afraid of God. In both ways sin has been an obstacle to the knowledge of God. If, then, we find the Christian with a passion for God, on God's terms, and with a growing intelligence of God, it seems reasonable to conclude that, whatever the process, sin has in him been effectively dealt with. When we find further that the Christian habitually attempts it in the belief that Jesus was serious and spoke from experience when he spoke of God; when we find that he achieves the impossible, captures historically the Roman Empire for Christ, wins Europe to a Reformation for Christ, makes Christ the mainspring of the most momentous changes in modern India and China; it again seems reasonable to conclude that the Christian is in touch with some real force. Jesus came in an age rather like our own, an age willing to discuss for ever; he came with the power of God and changed the world.

This is to treat Christian experience in a summary way, but the more closely it is studied, the more it verifies the teaching of Jesus upon God. When an experiment in science succeeds, it is fair to hold that the principles to be tested in it are confirmed—unless there is error somewhere, met and frustrated by some accident. But in science nothing is based on single experiments; a result is not counted established till it is confirmed by a series of experiments and by independent observers. The belief that Jesus has made a real revelation of God rests on the evidence of lives devoted to testing it in every century

since Pilate ruled over Judaea, in every continent, and by men of the most widely different antecedents, in race, culture, and religion. The Christian life rests on Jesus' conception of God as relevant, as a father, as ours in deepest literalness. But, again and again, it must be remarked that the impulse to put the thing to the test came and still comes from the personality of Jesus himself, and from the cross which Jesus chose and in which he showed men the essential nature of God.

A further point remains. That Jesus has stimulated men to explore God to his depths and heights, has already been said; but there is another side to it. God, it is men's experience, is to be apprehended along the line of every human faculty, every sensitivness. The author of every aspect of life will touch the human spirit at every point. Interests, as the Latin proverb says, pass into character; a man is developed by what interests and occupies him. The Christian occupation has been with God, following the cue and the impulse given by Jesus. What has been its reaction upon character? Does the Christian nation (so far as we can judge from the very partially Christian nations as yet known) recede as a result of living, as far as it does, on the principles of Jesus? Men's ideas of God, formulated or not, but acted upon, have been the most potent factors in the fate of races and institutions. It may seem abstract, but there are few things so drastic and operative as an idea. What have been the effects of the ideas of Jesus upon national life? That will occupy us in two later chapters, but, without risking repetition, it will suffice to suggest that so far the nations that have been most serious in dealing with the ideas of Jesus have not proved backward in other ways, whatever the test.

The same holds of individual men and women. Jesus, beside giving the impulse to explore God, enlarges our

capacities for knowing God. The habit of studying and assimilating all that we mean by Christ, enlarges a man's aptitude for capturing that mind of God which Jesus tempts him to explore. Jesus develops character in those who follow him, and character is the key to the discovery of God, as he said. He charms men to forget themselves in coming with him, and the obedience that is instinctive becomes illumination. The historical Jesus whom they follow, they discover—when their attention is taken from themselves and their own preconceptions and fixed upon him—to be not the veiling but the unveiling of God, and seeing him as he is they grow like him (I John 3:2).

V

So far the effect of Jesus in the experience of men as the Revealer of God. Out of this experience came the Christology of the Church. In Christology we begin to touch the region of theory, but the promise made to the reader[25] that he and not the writer is to be the theologian, will be kept. All that I now propose is to suggest that an examination of the titles given to Jesus by the Church, will show that they are each an attempt to explain his person from his work, and that taken together they shed a light on the Church's experience—a light the more valuable, because here the Church will not be speaking directly of that experience for any purpose, but will reveal it unconsciously.

The names given to Jesus are many and are drawn from a good many types of thought and analogy. Messiah is Hebrew; Logos is Greek; *Homoousios* is another Greek word, and more philosophical; *Photagogos*, the Light-bringer, came from the mysteries.[26] But they all point

[25] In the introduction.
[26] Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*.

to the same thing. Whether "anointed" by God, or the "reason" of God (an idea owing something to the Stoic "generative reason," λόγος σπερματικός, and "soul of the universe," *anima mundi*) Jesus is in either case recognized as one who has a special right, and even a commission, to interpret God to men. In other words the titles speak of the Christian belief that Jesus did bring a valid and reliable revelation of God to men. *Homoousios* says the same thing. If God was really, as the Neo-Platonists said, "beyond being," if he could neither be apprehended nor set forth, imagined nor grasped by reason, feeling, or any human faculty; if there was no link between God and man, then Jesus was as futile in the long run as any other man. But this the Church would not believe, and it "denied the antecedent," and affirmed a real essential link between God and Jesus; whatever "being" might be, it was not an impassable gulf between Jesus and God, it was something in which they were one.[27] When then Jesus speaks of what God is, he is not traveling outside his experience, he is speaking with knowledge, and in him we can know God. That lies at the heart of the Church's more philosophical doctrines.

There are simpler and dearer names than *Homoousios*. Jesus is Mediator, Paraclete, High Priest, the Beloved, for the men of the first century—all names that speak of the real relation which he establishes between God and men. All the Incarnation doctrines point to the same conviction that Jesus does reveal God.

If he does not—then it would look as if human experience had very little real value, as if little were to be learnt from it, whatever clarity and force of mind were brought to bear upon it. For if Jesus does not reveal God, our

[27] If Christ is only *Homoiousios*, "like in essence," we are really no nearer to God, the Church taught; "like, but oh! how different" underlay the Arian view, at its most irenical.

chance of learning of God from souls of less depth and purity and intensity is small indeed. We shall be driven back to the vagueness of the later Greek speculation; nor is that a distant risk. One effect of the discoveries of natural science, of the progress made in that field, is to emphasize the grandeur and wonder of the mind (if we may venture so much) that underlies the creation. We are liable to lose ourselves in a dim consciousness of a power that deals with universals at best, a power to be surmised, not known, of which little can be predicated beyond ingenuity and efficiency—features more and more staggering as we track out the laws and forces at work in the world, and less and less human with every accession to our knowledge. Less and less human (if the adjective may be allowed) this power becomes, less and less intelligible to humanity, because ingenuity and efficiency do not make character; and in proportion as they are magnified without the balancing attributes of love and tenderness, they make their possessor more awful, awful to the verge of hateful.

But this line of thought ignores the better part of our experience, and the part which can be more closely and clearly known and understood. It is the human side of things which we know; and, just because Jesus shares that, we can understand him and use him. To clear our thought and to give us a real base of action, we must have a firm hold on man's experience; and Jesus gives us that. Luther put the case strongly, but not too strongly, when he wrote in his Commentary on Galatians (1:3): "Whensoever thou art occupied in the matter of thy salvation, setting aside all curious speculations of God's unsearchable majesty, all cogitations of works, of traditions, of philosophy, yea and of God's law, too, run straight to the manger and embrace this infant and the virgin's little babe in thine arms, and behold him as

he was born, sucking, growing up, conversant among men, teaching, dying, rising again, ascending up above all the heavens and having power above all things. By this means shalt thou be able to shake off all terrors and errors, like as the sun driveth away the clouds. And this sight and contemplation will keep thee in the right way that thou mayest follow whither Christ is gone."[28] In his *Table-Talk* we find the idea again and more than once: "Begin thou to seek God there, where Christ himself began"; "He that without danger will know God and will speculate of him, let him look first into the Manger, that is let him begin below . . . Afterwards he will finely learn to know who God is. As then the same knowledge will not affright, but it will be most sweet, loving and comfortable. But take good heed (I say) in any case of high climbing cogitations, to clamber up to Heaven without this Ladder, namely the Lord Christ in his humanity."[29]

Our danger is the abstract; the Neo-Platonist gloried in it, but not profitably, for God in his thought became more and more emptied of all content and sank to being, as a modern philosopher has said, "the deification of the word *Not*." But if it is a real relation which Jesus establishes between God and men, if Jesus does reveal God, then, not to go further from the limits of our subject, we are led to a reflection, surely legitimate. If Jesus is continually enlarging our capacity for God, is it not a promise of fuller knowledge and clearer vision —a pledge that some day we shall see him himself as he is, and give him his own name? So at least one early Christian writer promises us (Rev. 2:17; 3:12).

[28] From the second edition of the English translation, 1580.
[29] *Table-Talk*, ch. I, p. 17 (folio); ch. II, p. 61.

CHAPTER VII

IMMORTALITY

I

In the so-called *Gospel of Nicodemus* are loosely linked two apocryphal books of very different interest and probably of different age. The first need not detain us; it is a retelling of the story of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus with much added detail, detail trivial as the clues in a dull detective story. To this has been appended, by the simplest of devices, a work of imagination. Joseph of Arimatheia tells the chief priests of two men risen from the dead since the crucifixion; the men are asked to tell what happened; they "made on their faces the sign of the cross and said to the chief priests, 'Give us paper and ink and a pen.' They brought them. And sitting down they wrote thus:

" 'Lord Jesus, the resurrection and the life of the world, give us grace that we may set forth thy resurrection and the wondrous things which thou hast done in Hades. We then were in Hades with all them that had fallen asleep from the beginning. And in the hour of midnight into those dark places rose as it were the light of the sun and shone, and we were all enlightened and saw one another.' "

Abraham and others recognize what is happening: "This is the light from the great enlightenment," and Isaiah gently quotes the prophecy he made when alive: "Land of Zebulon and land of Naphthali, the people that

sitteth in darkness, behold a great light." "An ascetic from the desert" comes and tells how he has made the ways of the Son of God straight, and preached repentance, and how when he saw the Son of God he said: "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world," and how he baptized him, and how he has been sent by him to preach to the dead. Adam and Seth take part and recall an ancient prophecy of the Son of God "made man," and patriarchs and prophets rejoiced greatly.

Satan now tells Hades of the deeds and death of Jesus, and bids prepare to hold him fast; and Hades doubts the wisdom of Satan's bringing him there. As they talked, "there was a great voice as thunder that said: 'Open your gates, ye rulers, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.' And Hades, when he heard, saith to Satan: 'Go forth, if thou canst, and withstand him.'" The gates are made fast, while David and Isaiah recall their prophecies of old. The cry to the gates is repeated, and Hades asks: "Who is this King of Glory?" The angels of the Lord say: "A Lord strong and mighty, a Lord mighty in war"; and on the word, the gates of brass were burst and the iron bars broken, and all the dead were loosed from their chains, and the King of Glory came in as a man, and all the dark places of hell were enlightened. Satan is bound and delivered to Hades till the Second Coming.

The King of Glory now turns to the dead, slain by the wood of the tree that Adam touched, and promises by the wood of the cross to raise them. Adam is filled with sweetness; prophets and saints break into thanksgiving. "The Saviour blessed Adam on the brow with the sign of the cross," prophets, martyrs, and patriarchs too, and "took them and leapt forth from Hades," and they followed and sang: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name

of the Lord; Alleluia! this is the glory of all the saints." He brings them to Paradise where they meet Enoch and Elijah—and "another, a mean man, bearing on his shoulders a cross; to whom the holy fathers said: 'Who art thou that hast the look of a thief and what is the cross thou bearest on thy shoulders?' " And the penitent thief tells the beautiful story from St. Luke, and adds how, when he reached Paradise, " 'when the fiery sword saw the sign of the cross, it opened to me, and I came in . . . and when I saw you I came to meet you.' And hearing this the saints cried with a loud voice: 'Great is our Lord and great his might.' All this we two brothers saw and heard," and they tell how they were sent to preach the Resurrection, but first with all the dead that rose were baptized in Jordan. Now they may no longer stay but depart, and their story ends with the benediction.

The document is dated by some scholars as early as the second century A.D.; but, whatever its date, the belief which it embodies belongs to that century; it is found in 1 Peter; it keeps recurring through the Fathers; it is embodied in the Golden Legend; and it was inserted in the so-called Apostles' Creed about 400 A.D., and it remains there. In the story of the two brethren it is told with remarkable feeling, and the great passages woven in from the Old Testament give it background and depth, and make it a sort of philosophy of history. From Clement of Alexandria onward it has been taken as solving the problem of the destiny of those who never saw Christ in this world, and further "thus, I think, it is shown that God is good, and the Lord able to save with righteousness and equality toward those that turn to him, whether here, or elsewhere. For not here alone does his energetic power reach, but it is everywhere and always works."[1]

[1] Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, VI:6, § 47.

We have, however, to recognize that many "descents into hell" were told of in classical antiquity—descents made by Odysseus, by Er the son of Armenios, by Æneas, and many more; to the north the Finns tell of Waïnamoïnen, and eastward are other legends. All these stories are prompted by the same impulse.

> "Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
> Before us pass'd the door of darkness through,
> Not one returns to tell us of the road
> Which to discover we must travel too."

It looks as if Man were determined to have some knowledge of that road and that goal, when all over the world we find stories of one traveler who found that bourne and did return, and with news of import to all who live and love. It may not seem of much import, but it may be noted that of all these heroes of discovery, Jesus is the only one of whom we can be sure that he was historical. If the "harrowing of hell" is fiction, it has grown out of an historical tradition, or it has been attached to it.

II

Historically the belief in immortality has had two bases in thought. Men have had to explain visions of the dead. Ancient religion and animistic religion to this day pay great attention to the reporting of such visions and indeed to their production. The *Lives* of many Roman Catholic saints and nuns, even very modern ones, are full of such things, incredible and absurd as they are to people trained to handle evidence with any scientific care. One Baptist mission on the Congo river lost its most attractive convert, because, during some native initiation ceremonies, he saw his dead father and learned from the dead man's lips that the Christian religion is false—a

story which the scientific observer will not at first readily distinguish from those told at Lourdes and elsewhere in Catholic regions. But for men no longer at the primitive point of view, such appearances have ceased to be conclusive evidence. Do such visions ever really give new facts, or do they merely emphasize with new force and color what men have known subconsciously all along? When we know better how far visions are, and how far they are not, the product of the brain that records them, the evidence of visions will begin to have value. But at present we are only beginning to realize what tricks the mind plays upon itself, and the part of the physical nature in suggesting them and joining in the play.

On the other hand, men have based their belief in another life on what they have observed of the operations of moral law. In primitive and even later society, a frontier crossed enabled a man to escape the consequences of criminal acts. Can moral law be evaded by crossing another frontier? men have asked. Is it conceivable that death brings Jesus and Judas to one end and one level, that God in the long run groups them together and is equally done with both of them? "Conceivable" is the touchstone here; it comes too near that "consensus" which the Stoics used to prove the existence of God, the after-life, divination, and other things.

If it is difficult to believe in life beyond the grave, is it less difficult to disbelieve in it? "Neither with the cursed things, nor without them," is a man's proverb on women, quoted by Aristophanes. We may not be able to manage with this doctrine of immortality, but we cannot manage without it. With the fullest realization of its difficulties—not merely those of the head but those of the heart too—men and women, grown and deepened, in whose natures humanity is most thoroughly and essentially human, have held the faith that God does not play with

us as children with sand castles, building elaborately and content to see the waves wash all away,[2] playing not with senseless sand, but with sentient natures like his own. If he could so play, surely he would be inferior even to ordinary men, how much more to the best and deepest, those trained and intelligent natures who have been taught in the school of love and pain and have learned there the value of the soul.

III

If we are to correct our own random impressions of haste or despair, it must be by watching the movement of thought over the centuries, and among those peoples who have shaped the thinking of our modern world. Accident plays a large part in history, but less than elsewhere in the progress of thought. We have remarked already the great tendencies in religion to emphasize the oneness of all regions of experience, the personality of God, righteousness, and the personality of the individual man. The last includes immortality.

Homer's picture of the world beyond is famous, a nerveless, noiseless existence, existence as it were without life, in a darkness that allowed only a bare consciousness of discomfort, without distinctions between good or bad, brave or coward. Sons-in-law of gods reached Happy Isles, at some stage in the history of epic poetry; but the picture of the dead as drawn by Odysseus is cheerless and hopeless.

With the development of the Greek cities in Asia Minor in the eighth century B.C. and the simultaneous awakening of the Greek mind all over the world and in every realm of thought, we find side by side with the great intellectual movement, associated with the philosophers and

[2] Homer, *Iliad*, XV:362-364.

inquirers of Ionia, another movement chiefly upon European soil. The cults of Orpheus and Dionysus, the mysteries of Eleusis with their teaching of another life, and of the need of preparation for it, may not have appealed—did not, so far as we know, appeal—to the circles of Thales and Heraclitus; but they captured a great constituency precisely in the period when men began to frame deeper thoughts and to see things with clearer edges. The Greek always leaned to a consciousness of his own claims on society and on Nature; and, though at this period he still had a vivid local patriotism, he was beginning to be more definitely than ever an individual. The emphasis on mysteries in that age implies the individual conscious of himself and provident of his own future after death. "Happy is he that has seen the doing of sacred things, the awful rites (of Eleusis); he that is not initiate and he that has part therein, have never the same lot, when dead and in dank darkness below."[3] Such language is unmistakable.

On the whole the philosophic mind rejected the cults along with the myths of the gods and much else; and the movement of the fifth century, with its thoroughgoing rationalism and its reference of everything to the standard of each individual, was not one to reestablish anything. Two names stand out at this point—names of representative and formative men—Euripides and Plato. Euripides combined in a very impressive way two strains not easily reconciled—he had a mind relentlessly logical, loyal to the new standards of thought, exigent to the bitter end for demonstration (his own word) and with it a faculty for passionate feeling. His insight into the human heart brings him to the verge of belief in immortality; he hovers about the problem—"who knows if life itself indeed be death?"—but he will not recognize

[3] Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, 474-482.

the craving of the heart for the object of its love as evidence. His reason checks his feeling, and he leaves the question in suspense. We have "no experience of death," he says,[4] and hearsay evidence is guesswork—"borne upon tales we drift, drift idly." God also for him is not demonstrated.

Plato, however, does not reject this intuition that there must be something beyond, though he sees as clearly that intuition is not demonstration. What he has to say on immortality he casts in the form of myth—"I do not mean to affirm that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true—a man of sense ought hardly to say that. But I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think that something of the kind is true. The venture is a glorious one."[5] But Plato strongly puts forward another doctrine about the soul, which it is said has an eastern origin—the transmigration of souls, and he binds it up with immortality. Euripides had known of this doctrine—it was in the air, for it seems that the Orphics taught it—but he would not have to do with it; it was a fancy without evidence of any kind, and he let it alone.

How far thought and the conditions of national and social life react and are each other's product, it is always hard to say, but a heightened individualism is the mark of the age of Plato and his successors. The philosophers who shaped the thinking of later Greece were nearly all unmarried and childless, many of them foreigners, voluntary exiles from their native places, some even barbarians, it would seem—men in short, who lacked many of the spiritual ties that make us thoroughly human. Their thought is individualistic—Stoic or Epicurean, Cynic or

[4] Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 191-197.
[5] Plato, *Phaedo*, 114.

Sceptic, it is all one. The city-state, shaken and virtually obsolete amid the great empires, was no longer a religion, so to speak, but a club, hardly an object of loyalty at all. If the transmigration of souls was at all widely believed in Greece—it is hard to say whether it was—it also worked against the social sense. The old primitive ancestor-worship, impossible now, had at least held the family together, as the city cult had held the city. But the transmigration of souls meant that all family ties were accidental and transitory—each man for himself, as he made his next reincarnation, or chose it in some Platonic other world.[6] Whether the Epicurean offered a better or a worse prospect in utter resolution into elemental atoms, who shall say? Resolution into atoms even on the showing of the religious might be better than the ceaseless "sorrowful weary wheel"[7] and eternal redying as someone called it. Even the Stoics were sure neither of gods nor the soul; God might be Fate or the Universe or Nature—it did not matter, such knowledge was needless.[8] And as for the soul, why fear change into something else which the cosmos needs? passing into "the dear and the kin, the elements?" You had no son before; you have none now; are you worse off? they asked. Yes, one is worse off, for one's soul has grown in insight, in depth and capacity for God-given joy and service. *Tantus labor non sit cassus!*

Immortality had no secure foundation in Greek thought; and men and women turned to Oriental cults which offered certainty, to god or goddess as might be, with whom some kind of sure relation could be established. There were weak points in the polytheism of these cults and in their want of connection with either morals or truth. But, as we have seen in a previous

[6] Cf. *Republic*, X, the story of Er, the son of Armenios.
[7] A phrase on one of the gold tablets found at Petelia.
[8] Justin Martyr, *Trypho*, c. 2.

chapter, men were in a hurry. Eastern astrology with its suggestion of a scientific basis, the immemorial antiquity, the impressiveness, the very cost and intricacy of Eastern religions, influenced them; above all, the assurance that that way lay the saving of the soul. If the mystery religions of the Roman Empire afford a pitiful exhibition of the decline of the human mind, it remains that they bear witness to man's unconquerable instinct for immortality. Philosophy had ignored it, and this was Nature's vengeance for a forgotten truth.

IV

When we turn to the Hebrews, it is quite another story. The Old Testament, as it is commonly read, is a confusion, but historical criticism finds a pathway. It then appears that there are there two groups of conflicting ideas, one derived ultimately from ancestor worship, the other and later from monotheistic belief.[9] The emphasis of the great prophets was upon the fact of God; on the earthward side they rather looked to the nation and its destiny than dealt with the individual and his hopes and fears as to another life. They did a great work, for they drove Israel out of the notion of a local and tribal god into the awful thought of One God who rules all the ends of the earth, who taketh up the isles as a very little thing. There are gleams of recognition of what such a God means for the individual. The poet, who wrote Job, "reflects all the darkness of the popular doctrine and likewise exhibits the actual steps, whereby the human spirit rose gradually to the apprehension that man's soul is capable of a divine life beyond the grave." Even in death he feels it is "still capable of the highest spiritual activities, though without the body," but he seems not

[9] Cf. R. H. Charles, *Eschatology*, p. 52.

to hint that this higher life may be endless, natural inference as it seems to us from the train of his thought.[10] The 73rd and 139th Psalms and the inserted 26th chapter of Isaiah show a later and higher development. But generally in the Old Testament Sheol is the abode of the dead, with various modifications, as men's thoughts of God and the hereafter grew deeper and clearer.

It was at one time a fashion to attribute much of later Jewish thought on our subject to Persian influence, but scholars today seem much less ready to assert this.[11] It is rather during the Macedonian period that the great step forward was taken from One God to his concern with each man forever. Many notions were afloat as to the Messiah and his kingdom, the destinies of nations and of men, and these were held unevenly as thoughts are—here discarded by the careless, there outgrown by the profounder spirits, in another region cherished by the pious as an inheritance side by side with other thoughts and hopes incompatible with them. The apocalyptic books, more familiar today than ever before, give, in their very confusion, a clue to the growth of Jewish thought down to the times of Jesus and his disciples. They show how a people deeply harassed by problems of national history and national future, persecuted by foreign rulers and abused by native princes, growingly conscious of the individual and all the ties of love and the implications of right and wrong, came to cast more and more on God and his more or less direct action upon the world. A Davidic king might be raised up to rescue Israel, or he might not; for the Anointed One is ignored by some apocalyptic writers, or kept in the background, while others make him of the highest import and speak

[10] R. H. Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 71, 72.

[11] J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 321, quoting Bousset and agreeing that Zarathushtra practically is to be struck out of the list of the prophets who contributed to the growth of Israel's religion.

of him as preexistent in heavenly state, the companion of God and the angels, at God's right hand, the supernatural Son of Man.[12]

The uncertainty about the Messiah is reflected in the various forecasts given of his kingdom.[13] It would be a supreme triumph of Israel, culminating in an earthly paradise. Then it became spiritualized in an indefinite way; the living and the dead were to receive spiritual bodies. It was transferred to heaven. A great crisis or catastrophe would inaugurate it; a great last judgment in this world, or in another, would bring the end of all wrong and oppression, the Kingdom of God, the utter rejection of the Gentile. So much was distantly in the vein of the Prophets; and then the individual raised his head, and the whole problem of the future was changed with the shifting of the emphasis.

Five elements contribute confusion to the pictures of the future—the Messiah, Israel, and now resurrection and immortality, and judgment. Resurrection and immortality are not the same thing. Who would "rise" was the question? All Israel?[14] or the just alone?[15] or all men?[16] Or is there no bodily resurrection at all,[17] as men began to surmise under Greek influence in the first century B.C., and is the true doctrine immortality?[18] Attention was directed increasingly to rewards and punishments, as the ethical interest prevailed over the national, and by and by reward and punishment were thought of as eternal. Finally, a new *aeon* or age without sin becomes the hope or expectation.

---

[12] Cf. W. Fairweather, *Background of Gospels*, p. 276.
[13] J. H. Leckie, *World to Come*, p. 30.
[14] Enoch, 2:1 f.
[15] XII Testaments; I Enoch 82-90.
[16] IV Esdras 7:32 ff-126. [17] Jubilees.
[18] I Enoch 91-104; Fairweather, *Background of Gospels*, pp. 283-291. There were Arab Christians in the third century (Eusebius, *Church History*, 6:37) who believed the soul died and decayed with the body and then shared its resurrection; a curious illustration of an older idea holding out against the Greek.

Thought has moved considerably, and a Messiah and a Davidic kingdom recede; where they are still kept, the harmonizing of the outlooks is impossible. In Philo the Messiah and his kingdom are very far away in the background, if not out of sight.[19]

Through all the confusion a clue is found, when we grasp that God and the soul and immortality are disentangling themselves from accidental associations, and standing more and more in the light as the real things of experience and of faith. The Jew has come nearer to the heart of the problem than the Greek.

V

Jesus drew his disciples from circles where the apocalyptic books were read and known, where men thought in the terms of apocalyptic. He, too, used the language, but as Plato used the Orphics; he said less and he meant more. The apocalyptic writers had wasted themselves on the circumference, and at the best had a mere confused mass of broken arcs. He emphasized the center. The details are nothing and he left them; but he brought men face to face with God. His disciples had believed in God, in the soul, in immortality, in future judgment, before he called them—believed, as we say, "in a sort of a way." Afterwards they believed with a new conviction and a new energy, though some of them were long in working out of the old ideas, and perhaps unconsciously, when they quoted his teaching, imported more of these old ideas into that teaching than belonged there. It is quite clear that Jesus identified himself with the growing belief in God, the soul, and immortality, and he gave an immense impetus to it; he gave it life, in fact.

For the early Christian one argument sufficed for im-

[19] Cf. Drummond, *Philo*, vol. II, 322.

mortality—Christ is risen. Men had seen him after his rising, had heard him, had spoken with him, had touched him. Stoics and Epicureans in Athens laughed when Paul came to the "rising again of dead men" (Acts 17:32)—educated people did not talk so;[20] they laughed and dismissed the subject, and went away to thresh again the rotten straw of Zeno and Epicurus, for Athens was a university city.[21]

Can we today say with Paul: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20), or have we to trim our speech to come a little nearer Athens? We have to consider the resurrection of Christ side by side with what we are coming to know of the facts of psychology, and we have to be as sure of our psychology as of the Christian story. We have to consider the tricks the mind plays upon itself and the part of the physical nature in suggesting them and joining in the play. We have to ask whether the disciples were not just at that stage of culture when the mind fails to realize it is playing such tricks; and whether we must say that Christ did *not* rise from the dead, but that certain psychopathic temperaments thought he did and suggested it to others. We cannot shirk such questions; and, in the present stage of knowledge, we shall not get, if we are in a hurry, any very encouraging answer.

Guesses have been made at what happened—guesses conditioned by our very slight knowledge of the soul and its way; and I shall not add to their number. Instead of guessing, we note that the group of men whom we meet in the epistles and the *Acts* are the same we met in

---

[20] Compare the savage outburst of contempt by Celsus (Origen *c. Cels.* 2:55), the "distraught women," "humbug," "misled opinion," "fancy" and "lying."

[21] If I borrow a phrase from *The Life of Sterling*, I have not forgotten Seneca and Epictetus, who, however, took their turn at the straw.

the gospels, but in outlook, temper, spirit, and faith they are changed. That is history, and it must be recognized and then, if possible, understood. Something has happened; we may recognize so much; and if we are uncertain what exactly happened, we may note that it turned defeat into victory, it put the hope of immortality on a new footing, and it changed the history of the world.[22]

But in any case, Paul put the matter once and for all when he said: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." We may not yet be able to solve our difficulties as historians, or to construct the story of the risen Christ, but one thing is forever luminously clear—the Christian faith is bound up with immortality; both stand or fall together.

Here again, if we may use the sort of canon we tried to apply before, we can say that, if Christian history and experience go for anything at all in a rational universe, then they point to some essential truth in the belief in immortality. Christian history, the experience to be read in the life of the Christian generations and still verifiable in life today, emphasizes the significance of Jesus. All that has past, all that has been done, carries us back to him, heightens his value, and forces us to ever more vigorous effort to apprehend him. Immortality for us depends on the Person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus, it may be said, added little to the ideas of the apocalyptic writers; but it would not be very wisely said. It is always bad criticism to suppose that to the original mind words mean at all what they do to the quotational type, to the intelligent echoes. So far we have seen God and immortality associated, and if now we find them again associated in the mind of Jesus, it is relevant, and it is fair, to say that we have a new fact. To judge of his

[22] This is well worked out by Mr. N. S. Talbot in *The Mind of the Disciples.*

right to an opinion on this matter of immortality, we have to make sure that we have exhausted the value and connotation of "God" in his thought and speech, that we are at his point of view and see God as he sees God, feel him, understand him, share his life and work as Jesus does. Such a canon of procedure would be laid down whatever the historical or literary personality we might be studying. The word comes from the thought—have we fathomed the thought of Jesus? The thought comes out of the experience—how near are we to realizing that? The experience depends on, as it helps to make, the personality. Are we sure there? We have not under our hands the whole evidence in the case for immortality, until we have made better use of the experience, the insight and intuition, the personality of Jesus of Nazareth. If it is the developed and not the immature, the whole man and not the half man, whose thought and insight count, whatever the sphere concerned, then surely here above all we must ask what does our utmost man think? and why does he think it? and how does he reach it?

It is to be noted that Jesus chiefly speaks of God in relation to individuals, as if it were in and through such relations that God is best to be known. The magnificent pictures of the Old Testament—"Clouds and darkness are round about him" (Psalm 97:2); "The sea is his, and he made it and his hands formed the dry land" (Psalm 95:4)—such pictures and conceptions Jesus hardly uses. All his talk, so far as we have it, turns on the significance of the individual to God, and in this he gives the individual a new value, associating him with a God so rich himself in new values. In parable and in direct speech Jesus brings out the incredible interest of God in the individual and his love of him. Perhaps the crowning instance is the conclusion to the parable of the lost sheep,

where he borrows or recreates a scene from Job. When God in Job shows the new-made universe to his friends,

> "The morning stars sang together,
> And all the sons of God shouted for joy."

In Jesus' story this happened for one sinner who repented. Is it credible that the moral being of a solitary human unit is so full of import for God? Could it be, if that human unit were as evanescent as the drift of smoke from a steamer at sea? Is not the bottom knocked out of all Jesus' teaching, is he not very nearly discredited, if Pindar is right after all with his thought: "What is any of us? what not? Children of a day! A dream of a shadow is man"? For here is a case, it looks, of "either . . . or"—one way or the other—the love of God for the single lonely human soul, or the whole race a dream of a shadow. A middle path seems hardly possible here.

Is there anything of moment for our purpose in the fact that, where Jesus Christ has been real for men, they have instinctively believed in immortality, as if it followed naturally? In the fact that, where love and loss together make the instinct and the intuition for immortality, men, wherever he is fairly represented to them, naturally gravitate to Jesus? *Anima naturaliter Christiana,* in Tertullian's phrase. Is it a vicious circle, or is it the natural fitness of things?

We have spoken of Jesus as a teacher with a unique experience of God, but if we submit our minds in all fairness to the experience of his personality, live with him, in him, as Christians have, the matter does not rest there. He begins to transcend our categories and classifications, until we have to grapple in earnest with the Christian conception of incarnation, and the Christian belief that he not merely gives us the truth about God, but brings God into our life here and now, and that he is in some

way the author of a higher life, the Saviour of souls, the captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10), in whom God will sum up all things as the goal of all creation. Our treatment of immortality will be conditioned by our Christology. If in the past the conception of God has been the decisive thing in the belief in immortality, today it is our conception of Christ that will be the norm of all our thinking, for on that depends all we think of God. Who then was Jesus, and what is he? and what his relation to God? When we have gone so far in Christian experience as to give him the high place that somehow he has reached when men have been honest with him, and with themselves and the handling of life, the discussion of immortality will be reopened, but on a higher and happier plane.

The discussion! But life is action, and it is in action that we test our theories and make our discoveries. On what are we going to act? On what "vessel," to use Plato's phrase in this connection,[23] are we to voyage through these strange seas? It may be that Jesus was wrong, that all the faith and consecration of the Christian centuries were of all vanities the most utterly vain. It may be so; but what is the experience of those who have been most serious in the matter? "This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith" (I John 5:4). Theory or experience, it is the Christian conviction that Jesus *has* "brought life and immortality to light" (II Tim. 1:10). At the heart of it is the experience of Jesus—"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation or distress . . . peril or the sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39).

[23] *Phaedo*, 85 C.D.

The world has little more to say than Edward Fitzgerald drew from Omar, little more than Pindar said—"A dream of a shadow is man." But the Church has learned a new song; and, however dark or mysterious the future, the conviction that Jesus must rule keeps the Church singing it.

"His Kingdom cannot fail;
He rules o'er earth and heaven;
The keys of death and hell
Are to our Jesus given.
Lift up your heart! lift up your voice!
Rejoice; again I say, Rejoice!"

CHAPTER VIII

ALPHA AND OMEGA

Corde natus ex parentis ante mundi exordium
A et Ω cognominatus, ipse fons et clausula.
Prudentius, *Cath.*, 9:10.

There was a controversy once, of which we hear little today, between Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians. It seems remote enough, this discussion as to whether God's plan for man's redemption, his device of sending his Son in the flesh, was conceived by God before the fall of man or after the fall of man. And yet a good deal is bound up with it. Did Adam and Eve and the serpent really disorganize the whole counsel of God for the world for all time? Had he to alter all his plans, and start afresh with a sort of second-best, with a patch, shall we say, on a mistake? Or are we to say with Plato that "God always geometrizes," that his design is thought out, that he knows what he is going to do and he does it?

Of course, the modern criticism of all such controversy is a simple one. How can we know what was in the mind of God round the time of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden—always assuming there was a Garden of Eden with an Adam and an Eve in it?

We have to accept our age and its modernity. Nothing is gained by affectation. The rather fabulous "Age of Faith" is not for us, however much we archaize; our date is written upon us, and we do better to accept it and be honest with ourselves. We do not know about the Garden in Eden. Emphasis on fact, on what we can be sure of,

with the refusal of mere supposition, is the great gain in the modern way of approach in the spheres of science, history, and religion; and it comes very close, as we shall see, to the mind of Jesus of Nazareth.

But very often weakness and strength come from the same source. There have been men whose weakness was theory. Our weakness today is to be matter of fact; it is a tendency to concentrate on facts, to gather facts, but to hesitate about using them when they are acquired. That is a refusal of one of the duties which God has imposed on the human mind. Facts are to be used. Imagination is a gift of God, given for a purpose. Our construction of theory on the basis of fact may be wrong, we are told; we have to reckon with that risk. But if we do not try to coordinate our facts, to reconstruct them, then we are not using them, and we are wrong again, perhaps more badly wrong. The great scientific discoveries have been made by men with the instinct for fact and the genius for hypothesis; but men who were prepared relentlessly to sacrifice every theory, however dear, when it failed to cover the facts. We have to frame theories and to test them; for it is by this method that we advance knowledge. Mere idle spinning of fancies is quite another thing. Work on the basis of our reconstruction of fact is one of the surest ways to fresh discoveries. Otherwise we might as well know nothing.

I

The early Christian was carried into a whole new world of fresh experience. There has been nothing like it in human history.

> "We were the first that ever burst
> Into that silent sea."

Our English poets have spoken nobly of the joy of that discovery of the Pacific Ocean; a whole new world unexplored and we the first to reach it! The early Christian had a similar happiness; he was face to face with new fact and new experience, far beyond anything that anyone had ever dreamt of. He started from the great fact of the historic Jesus, from his personality, from the largeness and variety of his character. To be with Jesus was revelation. To watch him, to see the movement of his face, to look at his eyes, to catch his tones, brought a man in a new way face to face with the real. Anyone who has been on some mountain with the mists all about him, the shapes of things all lost or transformed, knows what it is when the sun comes and the mists go, and you see the real world in a new light of beauty. There are friends whose effect on our minds is much the same. The coming of Jesus, his very person, cleared the mists away; and above all, his death lit up the heart of God. The Pacific beckoned the mariner on to exploration; and the death of Jesus has called men to explore God; and what followed his death, the resurrection and all associated with it, formed another great area of fact that set men wondering, thinking, forming theories, testing them, exploring God.

Men had been possessed by the notion of a divided world, where the ways of foreigners, their thoughts and their religion, were things apart and irrelevant. Our religion for us, they said, your religion for you.[1] It was a wrong theory, and it did not bear out even the facts of the ancient world; for Alexander the Great had shown the unity of the world, and the Stoic teaching emphasized the common humanity of man. But the news of Jesus Christ spread swiftly over the world; something leapt from heart to heart, it captured men, and all the invinci-

[1] Cf. Celsus, *ap.* Origen *c. Cels.*, 5:25.

ble natural barriers between men turned out to be imaginary. The great fact was revealed by the spread of the Gospel into all the world, that man is man, universally the same; with the same aptitudes, the same nature; the soul was, as Tertullian said, "naturally Christian," Christian in its inmost essence and nature. The common passion felt for Jesus the Saviour bound men together as neither empire nor philosophy had done. That, too, was a revelation. The call of the Gentile and the response of the Gentile upset men, staggered them, startled them into a new recognition of God and of all that is associated with Jesus.

The new relation with God, of which they had become conscious in Christ, was another stimulus to thought. Justified, as Paul said, by believing in Jesus, put right, readjusted, we have peace with God. With this peace with God went much else—victory over temptation, itself a revelation of new fact. The power of temptation declined, the interests were changed, when a man found himself in Christ. He had what today we might call heightened effectiveness, but what he called the power of the Holy Ghost. Paul strikes the note, when he says: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Further, men had what George Fox later on called "great openings," new visions of the relations of things, glorious divination of the purposes of God, of God's methods, of new forces at work in the world, glimpses of God's devices and God's ideas. Men found all these in Christ; but why?

Long before Plato had said that the unexamined life is not livable for human beings;[2] and here was the early Christian with an extraordinary mass of new experience, all associated with Jesus of Nazareth. He could not let it alone; he must move on to an explanation of Jesus; and

[2] Plato, *Apol.*, 38 A.

many were offered, first and last. The writer of the Apocalypse, looking before and after, summed up the story when he called Jesus Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I do not know of literary antecedents for his use of these two letters of the alphabet; but sometimes people are original, and not infrequently experience of Jesus is the secret of their freshness of mind. The writer coined a phrase and the Christian world accepted it.

II

First of all, let us look at Alpha. Nowadays we steal ideas from scientific books and scientific men, or, to be more exact, the journalists steal them and we borrow from the journalists, and at each stage of the process something is lost. Natural law haunts our minds. Some of us are possessed by a theory of natural law churning on for ever and ever and ever, with no heart and little mind at the back of it, as if evolution evolved itself and needed neither an intelligence nor a power behind it to start it or to maintain its process, whatever that may prove to be. Ancient Greek thinkers, the serious ones, emphasized God's Providence (*πρόνοια*). It was a great word in those days; it covered the government of the universe, and there were those who hoped that it covered the lives of individual men. The keynote of all Jewish apocalyptic was Providence—perhaps the soundest element in all that strange literature.[3] The Christian, growing up with the idea, and then brought into this new experience of Jesus, was bound to connect the two. God must have thought about Jesus ahead of the time.[4] What

[3] See Wisdom 6:8; 12:8; 14:3; 17:2.

[4] Here one Jewish view of the Messiah helped. The *Similitudes of Enoch* (I Enoch 48. 2 f)—dated by Dr. Charles, 96-64 B.C., teaches the Messiah's pre-existence. "Yea, before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits . . . (6) before the creation of the world."

is the alternative? Can we really picture God in the style of a celestial Mr. Micawber, "waiting for something to turn up," till, unexpectedly, through the unforseen action, I suppose, of natural laws, Jesus is thrown up on the surface of things, a happy chance, that enables some of God's ideas to be fulfilled, a great piece of luck for God? The thought is impossible; it negates the very idea of God.

Christians have always been amenable to the ideas of their times, and this was one bound up with the nature of God. They were confronted by what we still feel to be the most wonderful character of history, by the transformation of every aspect of life, and by a great movement in every people of the world they knew. Small wonder they connected their experience with their conception of Providence. God must have foreseen it; yes, before ever he laid the foundation of the world, they said, God loved Christ (John 17:24). The followers of Jesus felt they were witnesses of the supreme fulfilment of God's thought-out ideas for the world. God foreknew, God purposed and planned the death of Jesus on the Cross. The New Testament is full of that conviction. It was no accident, no blunder, no patch on a mistake; it was the design of God himself. To that the thought of the early Christian was brought by his experience of Jesus. A misguided ingenuity set the apologists of the second century to work upon the Old Testament, to prove by texts that from the very first God had been telling mankind in riddles what he would do. Nothing could be more ingenious or more perverse than some of these attempts, but they bear witness to the conviction that Christ is no chance item in the world's story.

The Assumption of Moses (dated by Dr. Charles between A.D. 7 and 30) makes Moses say that "the Lord of the world prepared me before the foundation of the world that I should be the mediator of His covenant" (1:14).

Christian thought went still further. In the Epistle to the Ephesians (1:4) we read that God chose us also in Christ before the foundation of the world. The Apocalypse speaks of names written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life (13:8; 17:8).[5]

The word in these passages translated "world" does not mean the earth; it means the universe, infinite, orderly, and thought out by God; and Christ, they suggest, is the deepest, the most essential, expression of the very being and mind of God; and they conclude, not unreasonably, that all began with Christ, that Christ is Alpha. That is not our modern way of thinking. It is well to face up to a conception of this magnitude, for it is a challenge, and to ask, if not this, then what? Have we the issue in our minds, are we facing the alternatives? Is the Church really thinking deeply enough about what is implied and involved in that historical Jesus, who has remade the world and has remade us?

That there is in this line of speculation a real danger of slipping into some form of fatalism or determinism, is evident. Luther found the corrective of predestinarian thinking in the very person whose significance has turned us in this direction. He saw the consequences of overemphasis, and he said bluntly: "Dispute not in any case of Predestination. But if thou wilt needs dispute touching the same, then, I truly advise thee to begin first at the wounds of Christ, as then all that Disputation will cease and have an end therewith."[6] If the impossibility of Christ being an accident leads us to a strong view of Providence, the other impossibility, of his being a cog in the inanimate wheel of things, neither more moral nor

[5] Cf. II Enoch (Secrets) 23:5; "Every soul was created eternally before the foundation of the world." We have here to remember the Platonic doctrine of preexistence.

[6] Luther's *Table-Talk*, ch. XXXVII, p. 405, in the first English translation (folio) by Henry Bell, a volume with an interesting story of its own.

less moral than Judas, is quite as unthinkable. The strong vivid humanity of Jesus is our prime fact; and in theology, as in all spheres of thought, every deduction has to be controlled by the facts of which we are certain. Historically, Jesus has stimulated thought and speculation, and has been again and again the corrective that kept it sane and true.

III

Let us turn to Omega. If God foreknew Christ, Christ is the fulfilment of God's ideas for man; the guarantee that man is not a mistake, a blot on the universe. Paul once said that "in Jesus is the Yes" (II Cor. 1:19, 20). Ancient religion was largely negative; the taboo dominated it; and on the moral side "Thou shalt not" was the note; as if to be man, a man must be anything rather than man, as if the human was all sinful. But Jesus, as R. L. Stevenson wrote,[1] "would not hear of a negative morality." "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk"; "Thou shalt not steal"—so ran the old law. "Be of good courage," said Jesus, "freely ye have received, freely give; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." As for the powers of evil which obsessed the minds of his contemporaries, while it appears that Jesus accepted the current belief in their existence and activity, he laid no stress on them; instead he emphasized God. Religious teachers have often put temptation and its dangers in the forefront of their lessons. In the story of the empty house Jesus shows his mind plainly; he has not come to reduce human life to vacuity and nonentity, but to fill it with God, with the great, splendid, various God whom he knows; and to prove that, so filled,

[1] *Christmas Sermon.* Contrast Emerson on "the pale negations of Boston Unitarianism."

it is human nature at last, lovable, living, and delightful.

Men tended to conceive of religion in those days under one type of life and experience. That habit of mind is still with us, and militates against religion. Jesus had the largeness of range that we find in all who enter deeply into God's thought. He recognizes the variety of human nature; and his whole attitude is the saying of Yes—not No—to it in its variety, not to our casual ideas of it, but to human nature deeply thought out. Man's nature is in essence quite another thing from the animal's—differentiated from it by memory and reason developed to a degree not found in the beast, by foresight, and above all by a far more highly complicated social sense, by that vastly greater interdependence of men on one another which follows from the far larger variety of types of mind and character and aptitude found in mankind. To miss this variety has been the great failure of many leaders who have sought to reconstruct society and religion; they have endeavored to reduce mankind to one mould, or they have tried to stereotype some fugitive phrase of social life. Here Jesus outgoes them; he sees more clearly and he grasps more firmly the purpose and mind of God.

The "promises of God," to which Paul says that Jesus is the Yes, are to be read in this manifold nature of man, in man's instinct for knowledge, for intelligence, for love, and for immortality, and for all the variety and fullness of experience that these mean for all and for each. Jesus does not miss what Paul sees. He does not prescribe religion of one type any more than he prescribes nature of one type. "Wisdom," he says, "is justified of *all* her children" (Luke 7:35). History has shown us how the most varied types of nature find themselves in Jesus and grow in Jesus; the artist, the thinker, the popular preacher, the statesman, the linguist, the scholar,

the musician, have all found freedom in him.[8] Yes, and what is much more wonderful, husbands and wives, and fathers and mothers, have found freedom in Jesus. Unlike so many of the great religious teachers, in that ancient pagan world, in India today and in the Roman Church, Jesus said Yes to the family with all its many interests, its unity and diversity, and its freedom.[9] His conception of God is so large and generous that he makes religion as free as the freedom of God and as various as the variety of God. The Church has its periodic fits of nervousness about new ideas and new energies. It is amazing to see how loose Jesus sat to many of the things that the Church has most emphasized. He lived in the universal, while his followers cling to the local and the temporal. He has no quarrel with the man who strikes out a new line or finds a new truth; far from it, there is no one who would more rejoice in the explorer and the pioneer. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" he is reported to have said to one pioneer spirit (Matt. 16:17).

Religion with Jesus thus escapes the many drawbacks with which it has to contend elsewhere. His religion is remarkably free from symbol with all the limitations and misunderstandings that symbol involves. He spoke of God naturally and directly, as a modern would speak of a subject that really interested him to friends whom he trusted. There is not the rather artificial awe about his voice when he speaks of God that some teachers have affected. It is because he is more genuine than they and has a stronger instinct for reality. Religion with him is spontaneous and natural intercourse with God. Much ancient religion, and a good deal that goes by the name today, we can only call taboo.[10] Whatever a taboo may

[8] More upon this in Chapter XIV. [9] And on this in Chapter XIII.
[10] Dr. Standing, of Madagascar, made a collection of over 1,300 taboos in operation among the Malagasy.

have been to begin with, it is always outgrown in time, and when it is not allowed to die it becomes an obstacle to progress. But Jesus looks forward and not backward, and in his teaching, faithfully interpreted in the light of his mind, there is no hint of fear of progress. His religion is not a matter of tradition, of loyalty and obedience to ancient revelation, nor does it impose a system that will in time grow old. The religions of his day were religions of old books; so is Hinduism; so is some Christianity today. His is the religion of the new song. Is it fanciful to say that only artists and explorers and thinkers can ever sing the new song—and people of the new life and the new spirit?

Can one imagine a God who created man with all his wonderful gifts in order that he might not use them; a God who would really want what men have made of themselves in the name of religion? One sees in India men with the cramped arm above the head—an arm withered and dry, that will never come down, that will never be of any use whatever, that will never do anything. I have seen a man whose left hand had nails ten inches long. Such self-destruction means the repudiation of a gift of God. And in the West we sometimes see men with paralyzed minds calling themselves Christians, as proud of the withered intellect as the Sannyasi of his ruined arm. That was never God's idea in giving men minds; and here also Jesus stood for God's idea. Above all others, he who sets men free from every kind of paralysis, intellectual and spiritual, is Jesus. Christianity is essentially progressive, or it falls short of the standards of its Founder, who, as Paul says, wants us to move on to the perfect man, "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Paul sees a progress that goes far beyond anything that he can ask or think. Jesus himself is the pledge of all this progress. There is no one else big

enough or brave enough to face it, or to make us face it. Think of the eighteen or nineteen centuries of revolution and change since his day; the people who have been undismayed through it all have been the men and women who had the outlook of Jesus and his faith in God. The dead past might bury its dead; they were the people of the future; and that is what Christ's people are still.

The "Yes" of Jesus goes, as we have seen, beyond this life. He is the pledge of an immortality, real, tolerable, and progressive. Jesus is too real, men have felt, for God to sweep away and remain God; and he has taught us to think of God in another way altogether.[11]

IV

Alpha and Omega belonging to the same alphabet; end and beginning explain each other, as Aristotle hinted. God's universe is one. If Jesus Christ is Omega as well as Alpha, if the experience, in virtue of which men have moved to this great conception of him is approximately right, then a light is shed on the whole of God's universe, and on the whole of God. Jesus becomes the solution of all the mysteries of the world and of human experience. He makes things intelligible; he opens to those who knock. All the doors are not yet unlocked, but he has the key; so that, as Dr. Cairns has said, "Here is something that discloses the very soul of things, the nature of the universe itself; the stars themselves move on the lines of Jesus." That is a great thought. Virgil drew a picture of battle, of wounds and death, and then of the burning of the dead. He describes the solemn ritual, and the torch set to the pyres; and how the men who loved them sit by and watch the fires blaze, and the bodies of their friends perish, watching by the pyres till "dewy

[11] See Chapter VI.

night wheels round the sky set with the blazing stars." [12] It is a stern picture, that Virgil draws, of the passionless stars in the quiet heaven, moving on in their beauty and wonder, irrespective of human hearts that break; the contrast is so true and so awful. But Jesus gives us another picture of One who calls the stars by name, who binds up the broken heart. So the Psalmist had said (Psalm 147:3, 4); but who could believe it until Jesus showed men the heart of God? Where Jesus has been real, the stars and the processes of nature, irrelevant to us as they seem in certain moods of experience, become interpreted by the love of God.

The world is full of mystery. Pain comes as a surprise to every fresh man and woman born into the world. The world's wrongness and confusion and death, all these things are, generation by generation, for each of us, problem and darkness. And there stands a figure who says, in the words given to him in the Fourth Gospel—whatever we make of the Fourth Gospel, again and again it sums up the very gist of the mind of Jesus—"These things," he says, "have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the universe you will have trouble. Be of good courage; I have overcome the universe." [13] Did he say that? The Christian world, as it has entered into the Christian experience, echoes the Apocalypse: "Yes, he did overcome, and blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him." "We see Jesus," says the writer to the Hebrews, "made lower than the angels by the suffering of death"; we see him "tempted like as we are," but "crowned with glory and honor." That is the Christian interpretation of Jesus, the Christian experience of Jesus. In Jesus the promise is that we shall see the end, which is to explain all the

[12] *Æneid*, XI, 182-202.
[13] John 16:33.

doubt and pain of that beginning with which we have to wrestle.

"Then the end," says Paul (I Cor. 15:24). The end has never been quite lost sight of by the Church. It has been the perpetual vision of the Christian thinker—a dream that quickened passion and gave new heart to work. The writer of the Apocalypse sees Babylon fall and the new Jerusalem come down from heaven "having the glory of God"; he sees Death itself cast into the lake of fire. In the darkest hour of Western history, St. Augustine wrote of the City of God. Bernard sang of Jerusalem the Golden in the misery of the Middle Ages:

"Spe modo vivitur, et Sion angitur a Babylone."

There has always been a feeling, a conviction, explicit or tacit, that the work of Jesus Christ will not be left half-done; that he is too great to cease to count, or to cease to be; that his is a spirit that will win through to triumph, to the full development of human character in the individual and in the race; that Jesus himself is a pledge that we can reckon upon the activity of God and the cooperation of God; that God is no mere spectator of the idle course of things, but the Architect, the Geometrician, who thought all things out, and will carry all things through; that God will hold on to his own, till Jesus Christ is indeed Alpha and Omega.

One thing, however, is vital. Alpha and Omega, with all that we have seen they imply, are names that Christian faith and Christian intuition have given to a carpenter. The writer to the Hebrews speaks of "looking away and fixing the eyes upon Jesus"—keeping full in the forefront, not a theological figure but the real, one, true, vivid Jesus; yesterday and today the same, and for ever; tender, intelligent, sympathetic, wonderful, available.

He means, what the writer of the Apocalypse means by Alpha and Omega, that Jesus in glory, whatever that may prove to be, is to be interpreted by those stories of his life and death which we know so well in the gospels.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH COMPROMISING

I

Of the discoveries made during the war, the most startling to many people has been the attitude of perhaps four-fifths of the army—that is, of the British nation—to the Church and to Christian tradition. "It is awful to realize that, when one stands up to preach Christ, the soldier feels that you are defending a whole ruck of obsolete theories and antiquated muddles." So writes Mr. Studdert-Kennedy in *The Church in the Furnace.* "The man in the street" (to use the unpleasant phrase of today) is beginning to think and to say what the educated have felt for a very long time.

If we speak of the Church, "we must admit," wrote Wellhausen in 1884, "that the nation is more certainly created by God than is the Church and that he operates more impressively in the history of peoples than in the history of the Church. . . . The Church is exposed to the dangers inherent in an artificial foundation." The Church had always held the exact opposite; it had been loud in its insistence that it was independent of the State, more divine in its origin, more universal in its scope. Ultramontane and Puritan—it is hard to say which maintained this view more strongly, the one thinking of a universal Church beyond the Alps, the other of a Church in heaven. When the war came, the panic haste with which the churches of this country prostrated themselves to

the Government and flung themselves into a nationalism little less hysterical than that of the press, was a confession that in England at least we believed the nation to be more certainly created by God than the Church, and Pope Pius and his successor did not do much better. The long alliance of English religion with capital, and its economic orthodoxy, seemed to millions of our fellow countrymen to prove that the Church was "an artificial foundation," an organization, superbly sensitive to finance, and a practical reinforcement of a good many other organizations, less arrogant in their spiritual claims, but not more commercial and political in their outlook.

As for the "ruck of obsolete theories," men have always felt an unreality in church history. Dogma stood for the unproven, the untrue, the irrelevant. Lessing, in the eighteenth century, had said that Christianity had been tried for eighteen centuries, while the religion of Christ remains to be tried; and Lord Morley says it is "hardly less true than it was a hundred years ago."[1] What *has* the Athanasian Creed to do with Jesus of Nazareth? Does it suggest his language, his attitude to life, his spirit? Is it not a hideous perversion? Perhaps Nietzsche was right after all, when he asked: "What did Christ deny?" and answered: "Everything which today is called Christian." Such views have long been held; and when they are so widely held, it is better for the Church to know it and not to live in a fool's paradise.

Its associations tainted with capitalism, its creeds mere jargon—what is to help the Church? In one body a liturgy of Elizabethan English and a ceremony growingly Italianate—in another a service dull, conventional, and vacuous—both as unreal as they can be; if you are not, it is asked, a woman or a corpse, what is there for

[1] *Recollections*, I, p. 370.

you in it all, you the Englishman of today? That is unfair, it is retorted; think of the energy and goodness of the clergy. Once again to quote *The Church in the Furnace,* Mr. N. S. Talbot this time: "There is great danger today in the exaltation of religious devotion and activity over love of the truth. During the last sixty years so much of the best and most intense achievements, whether Evangelical or Catholic, have been reared on a basis of reactionary thought." He adds that the theological colleges represent "a process of half-baking" and (on a later page) that their pupil is "in danger of being blinkered all his life." That is just what educated people complain of; the Church, for all its talk, is not sympathetic with progress, is not alert to recognize intellectual movement, mistrusts art as much as it does intellect, is afraid of science and Socialism, clings to out-of-date scholarship and pre-Christian psychology, presses philanthropy without economics and missions without anthropology. In fact Newman was only a little more explicit than the rest of them, when he avowed that the object of himself and his friends was "to hurl back the aggressive force of the human intellect."

If things are well with the churches, "they will be full," says Dr. D. S. Cairns, "of the spirit of life, of adventure, of experiment and adaptability." No one can say that they are full of these signs of life; the features of the Church today are mistrust of its message, fear, and abject compromise with "the man in the street," a feeling that his sense must decide upon what the Church ought to do and to believe. No wonder the Church is despised. Even a cab-driver expects you to decide where you wish him to drive you. The man in the street knows quite well in his heart that the Church ought to have clearer vision than he.

Summing up all this criticism and confession, we find

it comes to this. The Church has been criticized for its methods of organization, for its formulation of its beliefs, and for its interpretation of Jesus Christ to the world. These are three great necessary functions of the Church; and in each case the criticism touches the Church exactly where it has failed to represent the living Jesus. He was, it would seem, not greatly interested in organization, perhaps not at all; still less could the crucified carpenter be suspected of launching a society organized to support privilege and capitalism. He was not bound up with obsolete views of the world and impossible beliefs, the enemy of intellectual life; he was the freshest and keenest spirit imaginable. So far from representing Jesus to the world, the Church has made him odious to the intelligent mind. *"Ecrasez l'infame"* and *"Nous avons chassé ce Jésus-Christ"* are very illuminating and not improper comments on one Church's gifts of interpretation, and they will not be met by pleading the tender piety of nuns or the happy ignorance of peasants. Lourdes is no answer to Voltaire. If things are better in England, it is because English Christendom never quite excommunicated John Wesley and Charles Darwin.

II

The Church has had a long history, and when the worst is said of it, it has kept and cultivated some sort of relation with the historical Jesus. It has endured persecution for him, and its attention to him has kept it alive through all sorts of queer alliances with political and economic systems, and has set it free again and again from all kinds of tangles of bad thinking. The weak spot has been the Church's uncertainty what to make of Jesus. It has been devoted to him, but never quite convinced that he was practical, never sure that a great movement

could be "run" on his lines, on abstract ideas, never really alive to his genius and his seriousness. The Church has always been gathered from the world, and has always shown traces of the pit whence it was digged. A man does not easily get clear of his background and his upbringing, nor of the unconscious preconceptions that come from them and affect every judgment and every action. Part of the weakness of the Church in England is due to the fact that it has to draw its recruits from the English people. It was always so. The early Church drew from a complicated civilization, with centuries of thoroughly non-Christian thought filtered deep into every cultured brain, and many more centuries of primitive superstition alive in the fancies and feelings of those who thought slightly or not at all. Englishman, Graeco-Roman, and Indian must help Christ out with what they have from their heritage—"bring forth the best robe and put it on him." And a motley thing they made of it with "gold and guegaws fetcht from Aaron's old wardrobe or the Flamen's vestry," [2] forgetful altogether of his parable against patches. To win the world for him, they adopted good ideas from his competitors, which he had refused outright to do (Luke 4:6-8).

At other times, in shame and penitence the Church has recognized that to the end discipleship is the condition of apostleship, and it has returned to the real Jesus and learned of him, loved him and trusted him, obeyed him at the foot of the letter, and gained a new lease of life. And then the old doubt has returned. Is life sufficient without the help of the dead? "It all depends," as a woman missionary said to me in North India, "on whether we believe the Holy Ghost will come up to the scratch." Jesus undoubtedly believed this; the Church has not been so sure. It has believed in the Holy Ghost *plus*. Jesus

[2] Milton, *Of Reformation in England*, p. 1.

in Gethsemane faced a risk, and on the cross took it, which has often been too much for the Church.

The Church was left in the world—a very various, confused, and infinitely perplexing world; and the Master had not settled everything. He had frequently been unintelligible, as the disciples told him. He was, as a modern scholar shrewdly remarks, "singularly indifferent to the danger of being misunderstood."[8] Did he ordain sacraments at all, and if he did, in what sense? Scholars remark in the synoptic gospels some absence of interest on his part in sacraments and, indeed, the habit of mind that does not care for them. Did he "found" a "church," and what did he conceive it to be, if he did? What were its functions, its rights, its charter? Scholars debate these points, and often decide against ecclesiastical tradition. "The thought of founding a church," says Weinel, "had been even more absent from Jesus' mind than it was from Paul's." He must have foreseen some outcome from the intimacy of his disciples, some eventual tendency to organization; did he ignore it, and if so, why? Because it did not matter? Because he believed that the Holy Ghost might be trusted to guide them in all the organization they would need? Because he believed that a living faith needs no special methods, that God fulfils himself in many ways?

Let us leave questions for a while and see what our records tell us about the earliest Christians and their attempts to work together.

III

We may begin with St. Paul, who is our first literary authority on the Church and its character and purposes. Putting together what he says and implies, we find that

[8] J. H. Leckie, *The World to Come*, p. 23.

the churches in his day were not, as a rule, composed of very desirable people; they lacked refinement and culture. "The social aspect of a Christian Church," says a great Scottish divine,[4] "must have been in many cases very like that of a small dissenting congregation in an English town where dissent is feeble." Add to this some of the features of a church in India or China, gathered from the heathen. The Corinthian Church[5] was full of quarreling—not merely about belief and practice, but about more concrete things, which the members took to the law courts; and there were worse scandals still. The cheaper types of Greek, who formed the majority, had all the defects of the Greek mind, but little, it would seem, of its grandeur, and the Church bristled with every kind of wrongheadedness. Its members came from Judaism and heathenism. There were actual Jews, and Judaizers as well—perhaps these were the party which so blandly proclaimed "We are of Christ"; Christ had not announced any break with Jewish law, and had thereby set an example which they at least were upholding. There were ascetics and vegetarians, following lines of holiness which the whole world had recognized for centuries as the gist of all religion. On the other hand, there was a "Spirit" party, which, it now appears more and more, bore only too striking a likeness to groups in the mystery religions of the day—they were what in our times is called "psychopathic," subject to trances and visions and ecstatic speech with "tongues" (tongues unknown to grammarians or lexicographers, and of no value to anyone); they had revelations, and they prophesied endlessly. Allied with this party, or perhaps at variance with it, but certainly akin to it, were the antinomians, set free from the body, living in the spirit, and therefore free to

[4] Principal Rainy, *The Ancient Catholic Church*, p. 29.
[5] On this Church, see Kirsopp Lake, *Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*, ch. IV.

let the body have its pleasures while the soul rose superior to them—people emancipated from ordinary laws and conventions. As one comes to understand them, men and women, there is no wonder that in a city like Corinth Paul emphasizes that in dress and manners a Christian's first duty is to be conventional. Theosophy of one kind and another flourished, and every other kind of crotchet —baptism for the dead being one of them—in an atmosphere of sloppy thinking. Magical conceptions of religion were bound to be present in a community gathered from that world.

With such a medley of religious ideas, there were the most widely differing traditions of government. A Church recruited from all the world must expect to have differences of system and tradition. The Church had grown up like Jesus himself in the synagogue; and from the descriptions of the procedure of synagogue worship which the gospels give us, and those of the early Church, which we find in St. Paul's epistles, in the teaching of the Apostles, in Pliny's rescript to Trajan (about A.D. 112), in Justin (about A.D. 150) and in Tertullian (about A.D. 200), it is clear that the earliest Christians, when they left the synagogue or were turned out of it, followed in their new association (it might be more colorless to say, their new room) the lines along which they had always been accustomed to worship, and regulated their procedure much as they had always done, adding by the second century to the books read aloud the "memoirs of the apostles."[6] But many beside Jews of the Dispersion, trained in spiritual worship and used to synagogue control, came into the Church, and they, too, had traditions and habits. All sorts of systems have been recognized here and there in the story, and, if in some cases mistakenly, still variety is proved up to the hilt.

[6] Justin, *First Apology*, 61, 62 ff.

Not to make a long story of it, the government of village elders has been detected in the Seven, the succession of the next of kin in the predominance of James in *Acts* and of other relatives of Jesus, whose names and strange story are preserved for us by Eusebius.[7] The Gentile sick and burial clubs with their presidents and overseers are traced in the government of the Church; the word ἐπίσκοπος hints as much, and the fact that burial grounds were the first church property goes a long way to confirm it. (*Ne sint areae!* "No burial grounds!" is one of the first anti-Christian war-cries.) Roman governors could, and it appears did, allow Christian groups a recognition as burial clubs, which they could not give on any other basis of association. Here and there a great man joined the Christians with his household; he ruled, as he had done before, in his own *familia,* and "the church in his house" would probably obey him as readily as it had done while they were all pagans; he would hardly register his household as a burial club and it was scarcely a synagogue. Men who had grown up in the civil service of Rome, as organized after Vespasian, their minds trained to think in terms of Roman law and their habits formed in government offices, however loyally they accepted what they found in the Church, were bound to modify it. Their position would count, and their unconscious ways of thought still more. How much they influenced their new environment stands out amazingly when we compare the Church we find in Paul's letters with that in Cyprian's, scarcely two centuries later; every fundamental idea or tradition has vanished or is bewilderingly transformed, legalized past belief.

Put the two pictures together—the Corinthian recruits with their wild religious ideas and plenty of other people

[7] *Church History,* III, 20; giving an extract from Hegesippus (whom he puts in the reign of Hadrian, A.D. 117-138).

of the kind—and the decent serious men with a turn for order in procedure and sanity in thinking. Link the unconventional and the conventional as we have seen them, and ask who or what is to weld them, who is to rule, or is the movement to break up? Will the Holy Ghost suffice? For now the problems of the Church begin.

Danger lay in three directions. The honest group-leader, Philemon or Titus or Flavius Clemens (the Emperor Domitian's Christian cousin), found himself confronted with prophets, with thinkers, and with men whose religious ideas all came from the Greek mysteries. The types are distinct but not mutually exclusive.

Many great religious movements have seen the prophets reappear and have owed them great debts. "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" says Paul (Eph. 2:20). Men of insight and fervor and power are among them; men, too, with other gifts less valuable but more immediately noticeable—men ecstatic, fanciful, and unreliable, creatures of mood and impulse—men of trances[8] and visions, who "speak with tongues." They have remarkable power over assemblies; they carry them away; the mood of the prophet, his frenzy, may sweep from man to man, may capture the crowd; reason and its inhibitions are lost; and there is no telling what the outcome may be.

Paul makes the curious confession that he himself "speaks with tongues more than them all" (1 Cor. 14:18), but in the same connection he emphasizes sense and reason. "I will pray in the spirit, but I will pray with my understanding also," and "sing with my understanding." He will know throughout what he is doing and remain under the control of reason; he will not lose consciousness.[9] What might happen when a prophet was carried

[8] Dreams, too; cf. Jude 8; Plato, *Timaeus* 71, 72, suggests that after recovery from his sleep or dementia the prophet may be able to explain the inspired word rationally.

away by what he called the spirit, Paul shows us in what cannot be anything but a real incident: "I would have you know, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God, says, 'Jesus is accursed'" (I Cor. 12:3). Heathen religion of the day swarmed with men who spoke under possession of "spirits" and "daemons," as it does still. To untrained observers the psychopathic temperament is more than mortal, and the man who has it quickly realizes to what practical uses he can put it—at ancient Philippi (Acts 16:16) and in modern Congo. There is at first sight nothing necessarily heathen about this natural gift, any more than about astrology or spiritualism. The Church soon found that some principles of treatment must be thought out if the prophets were not to kill the religion. Someone would need the gift of "distinguishing spirits," to which Paul alludes (1 Cor. 12:10); "test the spirits," wrote John (I John 4:1). "If he ask money," says the *Teaching of the Apostles* (xi), "he is a false prophet"; and then with a warning that it is sin beyond forgiveness to test a prophet speaking in the spirit, it adds: "But not every one speaking in the spirit is a prophet, but only if he have the ways of the Lord; from his ways shall the false prophet be known, and the prophet." The explicit reference to the ways and manner and style of Jesus is significant.[10] The book calls the prophets "archpriests" (13:3)—a striking name, given in the New Testament to the Jewish priesthood (and by metaphor to Jesus); it marks the impression made by the prophets, while the danger is recognized.[11]

[9] Cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and Mystery Religions*, p. 287; T. M. Lindsay, *Church and Ministry*, p. 47; Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mysticism*, p. 12, who remarks that Paul evidently set slight value on mystic phenomena. John Wesley records their occurrence when he preached; if Charles preached, they did not occur.

[10] Cf. 2 Clement 13:3, on the contrast between Christian preaching and Christian conduct as a source of Gentile rejection of the Gospel as μῦθόν τινα καὶ πλάνην.

[11] The emphasis on the prophets points to an early date for this book; cf. Chapter XIII, p. 233.

The Church took refuge at last from the prophet in the president or overseer, the "bishop" as etymology would call him. Without disputing over the status and so forth of the bishop, we can admit a certain leading of the Spirit here. As the native churches of China and India and other lands largely pagan gain independence, we shall see strange outcrops of what we, taught by church history, shall recognize as heathenism; and a sound practical bit of advice for the moment will be "stick to the missionary," and it will be a parallel (saner, let us hope) to the emphasis of Ignatius of Antioch on the bishop. The early Church, perhaps, had suffered too much from prophets; but organization was too rigid a Roman trait, and the reaction to bishop against prophet was carried too far. "Prophesying," wrote Edwin Hatch,[12] "died when the Catholic Church was formed." It cost the Church endless schisms through the centuries, not all of them beneficial. The contest between the Spirit under control and the Spirit in free play, as it has been called, still goes on.

The danger to the Church from the thinkers need not keep us long. All thinkers are dangerous[13]—especially the quick thinkers and the conservative. Men came into the Church from the philosophic schools and from the Gnostic groups, and they brought *dogmata* with them, fixed ideas which they intended to keep and which they applied at once. An example will shorten the story. God, some of them held, and pain are contradictories; God cannot suffer, a godlike man cannot suffer; "Is Christ *pathêtos*, susceptible of suffering?" The question comes already in Luke's time (Acts 26:23; and cf. Luke 24:26). If Jesus suffered, he could not be Christ, they argued;

[12] *Greek Influence on Christianity*, p. 107.

[13] All things are at odds, says Emerson, when God lets a thinker loose in this planet.

if he was Christ, he did not suffer; he was Christ; therefore he did not suffer, and what suffered was a phantasm. This was the result of quick thinking with a conservative hold on an old dogma. This very issue caused the Church no end of trouble; and there were many more. Pending the results of sound Christian thinking, the bishop was the obvious rule, and then (more soundly) the tradition; and both expedients land the Church in new dangers of rigidity. There is always danger in associating religion, and especially religious thought, with law; law has always a tendency to stereotype what it touches, and even holiness has come under its deadening influence. Prescribed thinking (if the play on words may be tolerated) is proscribed thinking.

Most serious of all, because (apparently) least suspected, was the danger from the mystery religions. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking," said Paul (Rom. 14:17), but he was a Jew, and the finer religious tempers of the Graeco-Roman world had another experience. They had known contact with gods whom, on becoming Christians, they had recognized to be daemons only, but still real and capable of contact with their worshippers; and this had been by initiation, by sacrament, by mystery. The modern anthropologist sees clearly that they had been relapsing to the level of primitive animists, weaving religion out of hole-and-corner, taboo, and make-believe; and he comments on the extraordinary revival of every kind of old pagan superstition and the invasion of the Western world by the sham science (astrology in particular) and sham religion of the Orient, not the thought of the Orient at its best. But the men of the day thought they saw further than Paul and the anthropologist. They were satisfied that truth can be conveyed in religious emotion, that feeling may unite you with God, that the initiated may in trance have the vision of

God and be an *epopt*, that the holy fast and the mystic fare may corporeally make you one with God and transform your mortality into immortality. It was an age when spirit itself was counted matter; and the Stoics, holding this ultimate identity and having allowed astrology and divination to be real sciences, ended by conceding more or less every religion to its adherents. Men and women came into the Church who thought in the terms of the old religions. In them they had known spiritual peace or at least satisfaction; and they began to interpret their new Christian experience in the terms of the old. They came over in such numbers and were admitted so easily, that at last their conceptions prevailed. And then where lay the real value of the Christian religion?

Behind the religion of Jesus and the mystery religions lay totally different principles, and, above all, fundamentally different conceptions of God. The Father of Jesus was as unlike a mystery god as could be imagined; every idea of depth and moral grandeur, of truth and purity, of love and fatherhood, that we find associated with God in the teaching of Jesus makes the difference more impressive. Jesus lived in the open air, thought in the open air, and the sunshine; these religions were the affairs of caves,[14] of mummery and pretending and symbol, proper to polytheism. "Jesus," says a modern scholar,[15] "nowhere shows the sovereign clarity of his intelligence more astonishingly and obviously to anyone who knows anything of antiquity than in that whole passage where he says that nothing from without can either defile or cleanse a man." The mystery religions were primarily magical and retrograde, condemned by all the best minds of Greece;[16] their motive principles were fear

[14] The shrines of Mithras were built so as to seem caves.
[15] Professor John Macnaughton, of Toronto.
[16] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, II; and the question of Diogenes: "Will Pataikion the brigand have a better lot after death than Epameinondas because he has been initiated?"—Diog. Laert., 6:39.

and a desire for self-maintenance. The teaching of Jesus, his insistence on intelligence, was the exact opposite of the artificial fog, the vanity, and the traditionalism of these cults. It is the greatest irony of history that in the terms of these mystery religions the faith of Jesus was to be interpreted for centuries. It was not till the third century that the Church succumbed to the attack, and it was the sixteenth when Christendom threw it off.[17] It is a measure of the greatness of the Christian religion that in spite of this inheritance from heathenism, and much else from the same source, it bred saints and heroes, martyrs and thinkers, who still caught the spirit of Jesus and triumphed over the danger that swamped millions in superstition.

IV

The victory of organization and the sacramental interpretation of the religion had consequences the most momentous—though not surprising, when we grasp how entirely alien the new ideas were to the mind of Jesus, and how antithetical.

The early Church had been something of a democracy, made so and kept so by the lay traditions of the synagogue and the Greek instinct for individual thought and action. An official priesthood, charged with the duty of administering sacraments like the graded priests of Mithras, and entrusted with the intellectual responsibility of deciding the faith of the Church, found its analogue in the bureaucracy of the Roman Empire; its warrant it drew from the Old Testament by expedients of interpretation that sound scholarship will not allow.[18] It pro-

[17] See A. V. G. Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought*, pp. 33, 126, 251, 376.

[18] See Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 261; and cf. p. 244, for his statement that there is no sacerdotalism in the N.T.; it came (p. 260) from Gentile sources in the first instance.

duced the same effects in the Church that the system did in the State. Behind both lay the belief that the ordinary man cannot be trusted with his own affairs; his political and his spiritual salvation alike need a higher intelligence. At the bottom of the new theory of the Church was the idea that the common man is unequal to intellectual effort, but can have enough of God without it; a flat denial of everything Jesus taught. Eventually the Gospel itself had to be refused to the laity; it would only confuse them and lead them astray. The priesthood of all believers which we find in the New Testament, the equality of all Christians, as all alike sharers in one great salvation, the insistence on the immediate access of every soul to God, and on the spiritual character of all real religion—such fundamental Christian conceptions were now naturally excluded *ex hypothesi;* they ran counter to the religious ideas of the age, and the fact that they are inherent in Jesus' view of God and essential to it was ignored and lost. Interpretation could do a great deal with the allegoric method, with a strong suggestion from the mysteries, and a public progressively ignorant. The Government's civil service did a great deal to kill initiative—a signal fact to be remembered in explaining the decline and fall of the Empire; but the civil servants were not miraculous or magical beings, and before long the priesthood was both miraculous and magical. No wonder men were dwarfed; no wonder that in such a world intelligence declined, and the Northern barbarians found a debased manhood that could neither think nor act, a people who in literature were content to copy, in political life to obey, and to shut their eyes in religion.

Salvation came to be associated more and more automatically with the Church and its sacraments; apart from the Church there was no salvation; all must be in it for safety; conviction was of less consequence. Cyprian

lays down the theory definitely that Noah's ark is a type of the Church. He compiled a handbook of typology, the effects of which do not, perhaps, even yet quite all belong to the past, and this is one of his types. And, unfortunately, it was a true one. It rested on what everybody knew perfectly well. Noah's ark contained beasts clean and unclean, and so did the Church. (A modern suggestion has been that there was one difference—the unclean did not go in by sevens into Noah's ark.) What a contrast between Paul's "elect, called, holy," and Cyprian's "clean and unclean"! The persecution of Decius showed how sound the comparison with the ark was. It broke suddenly on the world, and, as Professor Gwatkin used to say, there was a rush to the altars. Christians made haste to sacrifice to heathen gods, and got certificates from the magistrates to prove they did so. Several such *libelli*, as they were called, have been found in Egypt.[19] When the storm abated, the renegades wanted to come back to the Church, and they were allowed to come—on terms of penance and at the request of martyrs who had stood firm. They had to get back into the Church to escape damnation, and penance was more readily intelligible and more definite than repentance; it was something concrete and external.

There were two reactions from this new theory of the Church and the practice that it produced. The Church failed to satisfy the ardent individual religious temperament. The conviction was in the air, the heathen conviction, that matter is impure, that sense and sex are unclean; and there was the object-lesson of the Egyptian monks of Serapis and many more who renounced sex and the world. Christian monasticism rose, a protest against a lax Church, a new and strenuous way of imitating the

[19] One is printed with a translation in Prof. Milligan's *Greek Papyri*, No. 48 (p. 114).

Christ who came eating and drinking. Simultaneously, or very little later, rose the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church—between those whose names are indeed written in heaven and those who are for the time within the Church on earth. Both reactions testify to the same feeling of the unreality of the Church. The sects and movements of the Middle Ages revealed similarly that the Church was not meeting the needs of the human mind.[20]

A great organization, in proportion as it is successful and means to be more successful, must have practical men to manage it, whether it is a railway company or a church; and it tends to choose leaders of the strenuous successful type, who can speak for it with the Government and command the support of ordinary people.[21] Ordinary people and the Government alike wish it; both want things settled. The type is familiar to us, not too subtle, not too intellectual, not too spiritual, but quick, drastic, and effective. The last two adjectives, or their equivalents, come in stories of episcopal elections of the fourth and fifth centuries; the last bishop was not "a doing kind of man," the next shall be. So Ambrose and Synesius are transfigured from laymen to bishops, one a soldier, the other a philosopher and hunter. The Church was not always so lucky in its choices. The practical official always overdoes his simplifications; he will compromise at the cost of the spiritual issue; he seeks short cuts, and in the region of the intellect and of spiritual truth short cuts are peculiarly dangerous. The great

---

[20] See A. V. G. Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought*, p. 207.

[21] Von Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity* II, 130-132, quotes from Eusebius, *Church History*, VII, 30, a remarkable (though hostile) account of a third century bishop, Paul of Antioch, with "the customs and bearing of a high state official." When the church deposed him, the Emperor Aurelian recognized as bishop that one with whom the bishops of Italy and Rome were in communion—an interesting example of the practical in church affairs.

things will not be simplified in that way. Constantine, for very proper reasons of State, reconciled the Empire and the Church; he got control of the Church; and then, resolved to have no more divisions in the Church, he summoned the bishops to Nicaea in A.D. 325; he sat by and waited till they, with no pressure from himself, decided what was Christian faith; and then he intervened as Emperor—all the world should accept it at once and be done with heresies and unchristian divisions. The Church has generally had to pay for its alliances with governments.

"Better bad laws that are fixed," said an Athenian statesman, "than good ones subject to change";[22] and every practical man agrees with Cleon. There is always a sort of horse-sense about business men, but they sometimes fail to realize that the gifts required for a swift decision in a purchase of barley or indigo are not quite those required for the discovery of spiritual truth. The official tries to take the average opinion of today, but it is generally yesterday's news that he gets; tomorrow is not practical politics, it can take care of its own affair, as someone said in another connection. That mistrust of tomorrow, which so tragically parts fathers and sons, is still more a mark of bureaucracy. The demand of a great organization for leaders whom it knows involves the rule of old men; the rank and file often do not recognize a pioneer until he is left behind. All over the world, and in every communion, the Church tends to be controlled by the established and the practical; and to these the spirit of Jesus cannot be congenial. He came to set fire on earth, to launch divisions, to put a leaven in society which would never leave it in peace; and the Church stands for traditional order, a deposit of truth, settled

[22] Thucydides, 3:37.

economics and stable society, for all that old men love and young men doubt, for reaction and unreality.

"A real belief in Christ, besides answering questions, starts them."[23] One great part of the Church's work has been to think out Jesus Christ, no easy task. When the Gospel reached the Greek world, it underwent change, and necessarily; for the Greek mind was not the Hebrew. The hillside is one and the same, but when it was said that Robert Burns chose his farm as a poet and not as a farmer, we have a hint of how differently men may judge; and which is the real, the farmer's Mossgiel or the poet's? The change that the shift to the Greek world meant was inevitable, full of risk but not formidable. The Christian was forced to think out the relations of Jesus with "all time and all existence." He had to clear up for himself the bearing of his new experience of God in Christ upon every problem of thought and conduct, of society and government. It meant a clearer view of God and a firmer grasp of Christ—a greater Christ than men had dreamed, ampler and richer, "very God and very man."

So much was all to the good. But men grew weary of heresies, tired of thought. They accepted Greek philosophy's preconceptions in the Roman Empire without that brilliant freedom, that passion for truth, that we know in Plato. And the Church began to insist on a "deposit" of truth similarly left by the Apostles.[24] The Christian faith was to be discovered by adjustment; and when its synods and councils met, they were filled with officials and old men. How near disaster they could come, we are reminded in the saying *Athanasius contra mundum.* The young Athanasius saved the situation at

[23] N. S. Talbot.

[24] The beginning of it in Jude 3; "the faith which was once (ἅπαξ) delivered to the saints."

Nicaea, almost single-handed, and rescued the Church from a fatal compromise. But what were the credentials of the bishops to warrant them in settling the Christian faith? Paul's caustic comment on the small contribution of professional "pillars" comes to one's mind; "they added nothing to me" (Gal. 2:6). If the Church *is* "the body of Christ," the "body" has too often tried to usurp the functions of the Head. For a defense men fall back on "corporate thinking" and "Christian consciousness"; but here let me quote Dr. Tennant: "A common mind is not only a superfluous conception . . . it would seem to denote the non-existent."

Once framed, there the creed was, to accept and not to discuss, a good civil servant's rule.[25] Government fixes the rates for parcel post; you pay ninepence for two pounds, or we do not accept your parcel. There is the creed; take it as it stands, or—on second thoughts, we will make you take it. And the hideous story of persecution began, and was justified blasphemously with words of charm and grace, "Compel them to come in (Luke 14:23). Faith came to mean no longer a personal relation with the Father of Jesus; God, it was held, would like the civil servant, have nothing to do with a man, unless he accepted certain Greek speculations, hardened into Roman law. It was a premium on thoughtlessness; and ever since the Renaissance and the Reformation taught men to think again, the old creeds have meant unceasing difficulties. Not that they do not embody truth, but they speak a language which for most men is dead. At Pentecost, we are told, every man heard in his own tongue; at Nicaea the language was Greek. Our debt to the Greek is chiefly the inspiration we gain from his

[25] Cf. W. Cockshott, *Pilgrim Fathers*, p. 146: "In England . . . as soon as the Reformation movement began to take hold and its tendency to make people think for themselves was perceived, the press was placed under censorship."

insistence on thinking in Greek; it is a warrant to us to think in modern English, to do it with the precision of Socrates and the glow and the faith of Jesus.

V

Our story has been a melancholy one, because we have concentrated on one half of it. But the Holy Ghost was never really extinguished; that Spirit is not easily quenched (1 Thess. 5:19). The leaven works in the meal, even if men try to freeze the bubbles. There is such a thing as Christian instinct and it always responds to Jesus. The Church and the creeds? Oh! yes! it accepts them and forgets them, and lives in contact with the Saviour. This is not the right solution, of course; it was a quick cut, and a better path has to be made. The Church, as a living thing, has always had unsuspected powers of readjustment without losing its life, and especially the power of absorbing new-found truth without injury. Council and civil servant, journalist and "man in the street," kings and emperors, have tried their hands. "Sire," said Theodore Beza to the King of Navarre, "it belongs in truth to the Church of God, in the name of which I speak, to receive blows and not to give them; but it will please your majesty to remember that it is an anvil that has worn out many hammers."[26] It will wear out other hammers yet. The Holy Ghost will never quite come to the level of "the man in the street," but he, when he takes time to reflect, will, in the words of Jesus, "rise and go to his Father" and take the Spirit of Truth as his guide. The next two chapters will bring us further into the inner life of the Church, and may help to explain why, despite its accommodations with the world, it lives and triumphs.

[26] H. M. Baird, *Rise of the Huguenots*, II, p. 28; Reyburn, *Life of Calvin*, p. 297.

CHAPTER X

THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS

One of the regular names that Paul uses for Jesus is "Lord." Paul's writings are haunted by the word. In the concordance there are whole columns of it. It was a high word, meaning the master of the slave, the master of the family; and it was a name given also to kings and gods. Jesus is for Paul above all things Lord; and that he should give him that name is significant. We have only to think of Paul's Jewish boyhood—of the synagogue and the reading of the Old Testament; how at home he was taught Hebrew; how he read it with his father, picking out one by one the words in the old character, and how he would come by and by to a word of four letters, and the boy stumbled, as a boy learning to read will; he began to spell it, for he knew all the letters. "No," his father said, "do not say it. That word is not said. Say *Adonai*" (the Lord). For centuries the Jew has never said that name of four letters, JHVH, but always "the Lord." Where it is set in capitals in our authorized version, there stands the word that was never pronounced, and instead of it men read *Adonai*. But the time came when Paul gave the name to another; and the other kept the name for ever. The New Testament is full of the Lordship of Jesus. Two of its most regular descriptions of the Christian man, as "slave" and "saint," emphasize it still further. As all these names were given and accepted by members of the Christian community, it

is clear that some considerable experience lies behind them, if we can only recapture it.

I

"From henceforth let no man trouble me," wrote Paul to the Galatians (6:17), "for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." The marks are *stigmata.* In the market-place of any town in the province of Galatia, to which province this letter was sent, any day slaves could be seen branded with the names of their owners, with letters or marks burnt into the living flesh, never to be washed out. Sometimes there were the letters F U G, which stamped a man as a fugitive slave, a runaway who had been recaptured and who bore on the side of his face, burnt in, the letters that told his shame.[1] Paul, the Jew, the thinker, the Roman citizen, says he is a branded slave—a confession of what we may call the very lowest depth of Christian ignominy. Men reach it in different ways. "I submitted," writes John Wesley in his journal, "to be more vile and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation." He had not thought he would sink to that. The picture, so often seen in galleries, of St. Sebastian, stripped naked, tied to a tree, and pierced with arrows, is not a bad parable of Christian service. When a man has touched bottom in shame and pain, he can do his work, as he could not, so long as there was something to which he could cling, some vestige of intellectual pride or even intellectual decency, something that stood between him and criticism. Might he not have been protected, and saved from some things? No! He is to be spared nothing; he is to sound the depths. "From

[1] Herodotus, 2:113, speaks of slaves in Egypt taking on them the *stigmata* of "Herakles" to escape from their masters; but I do not think this is in Paul's mind.

henceforth let no man trouble me. I am a branded slave."

Men play with the idea of being captains of their own souls. Paul was not. He had been; and then, as he says, "necessity was laid upon him," and he became a conscript of Christ. That was nearer the mark than one might think; for sometimes in the Roman Empire the conscript was branded too. The term, "the called," at the beginning of some of the epistles, does not mean "invited"; it is nearer the sterner sense of our phrase "called up." What it has meant, plenty of people know—the ruin of their affairs, hardship, subjection to an unwelcome control. "I have suffered the loss of all things," says Paul. The cross was still a scandal, the Christian Church ignominious, and Jesus himself an unpopular and despised impostor. The careers men never reach are sometimes harder to give up than those that they have achieved. Paul, a man of learning and charm, standing high among the men of his age and race for character and attainment in his own religion, a man with great prospects before him, sees everything swept away; and he is the slave of Jesus. It was no choice of his own; none. Men talk today about choosing Christ; but Paul did not choose him. Jesus chose Paul, got him, and branded him, so Paul says. Paul's body was covered with scars, marks of stones, marks of Roman rods. Possibly some of the men who read this letter at Lystra remembered the day when they threw stones at him, and hit him, and left their marks on him; and Paul says they are the *stigmata* of Christ.

It is worth while to note that Paul's metaphors describing Christian duty in terms of debt and slavery and stewardship, were all previously used by Jesus himself. If they seem hard to us and unsympathetic, Jesus took them as not unnatural illustrations, and they recur inde-

pendently to Paul. There is surprising severity in Jesus' parables from slavery; and Paul in his turn recognizes the stern element in the Gospel.

Paul's life shows in three ways at least the effects of the Lordship of Jesus. In the first place it is a life controlled by Jesus. He and his friends think of going into Mysia, but the Spirit of Jesus will not allow them; into the province of Asia, but the Spirit of Jesus forbids (Acts 16.); and then comes the vision of the man of Macedonia, and with it guidance. The Quakers speak of a man having a "stop"; and a man knows what his own "stops" are. Whatever they were in Paul's case, at one and another point he was "stopped"; and then at Troas he had "a concern," as the Quakers say, to go to Macedonia; and in each instance he was right. He was told at the Damascus gate to go into the city, and it would be shown to him where he was to go next; it was to be a life of orders given and obeyed. The Spirit of Jesus guides and controls the man throughout. It takes away a great deal of freedom, but it gives something else. For if the guidance is the guidance of Jesus, the responsibility belongs to Jesus—not to Paul, so long as he obeys. That is a very great thing indeed. Men criticized Paul's message. Very well! "Who art thou," he says (Rom. 14:4), "that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." And with one of his familiar tangents of thought, he adds: "Yea, he shall be holden up." "Let no man trouble me; I am the branded slave of the Lord Jesus." So he says, finding, one guesses, in the thought consolation for messages rejected.

If Jesus tells Paul not to go into the province of Asia, then Paul is not responsible for Asia. If Jesus sends him to Macedonia, and he finds himself in prison there, then that is where Jesus wishes him to be. If he has

got his friend Silas into prison too, the responsibility still rests with Jesus and not with Paul. Tertullian has the same thought put into military form. He speaks of the Christian in persecution. God assigns a man to a certain place in the world, to stay there. For some Christians, Tertullian says, the whole New Testament is summed up in one text: "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to the next." But he was not going to flee to the next. He draws an illustration from the army. A soldier goes to battle; he fights; he is wounded; he falls; he dies. Who willed it? The man who enlisted him as a soldier. "There you have the will of my God"; stay in Carthage! And he stayed himself and was not martyred.[3] It is the same story as Paul's, who also uses the military metaphor. The responsibility rests with Jesus Christ. What a consolation that can be!

There is another element of consolation. At the end of his first letter to the Corinthians Paul sets two words which English people run together. But *Anathema* and *Maran-atha* have nothing to do with each other. The Greek word is a curse and the Aramaic a blessing. Let such a man be *Anathema!* That is a curse. *Maran-atha,* our Lord cometh! That is a blessing. The slave is in a dreadful position; but the Master is coming, and then all will be well. Surely that phrase is the echo of Jesus. How often he spoke of slaves in positions of trust working and waiting for an absent master! "The lord of that servant cometh in an hour when he looks not for him." "Thank God!" says Paul, "*Maran-atha,* our Lord *is* coming! Then he finds me where he wishes me to be."

II

The word *saint* has had a curious history. It stands in a very peculiar position today. We give it to people

[3] Tertullian, *De Fuga,* 14.

whom we admire for gifts of a highly specialized type, and at the same moment we are apt to suggest that they are not very fit for this world, to feel that they are a luxury but not a real help to mankind in any great emergency, or indeed in the common round. But Paul uses the word *saint* in the strangest connection; for he applies it to the Corinthian Christians at the head of the epistle in which he describes their character for all time —"to the sanctified in Christ Jesus, called, and saints."

To understand this, we have to look into the meaning of the word in Paul's day; and we may find that it has more meanings than one, and perhaps is changing from one to another, with uncertain suggestions of both; and all depends on who uses it. Throughout the Mediterranean world there was a series of words in one language and another representing more or less what, by a term, borrowed from the South Seas, is called *taboo.* (In Irish there is an equivalent term, which nobody thought of till after the word from the South Seas was established.) *Taboo* means, roughly, something reserved for, or connected with, a god, in some way or other. Things, places, or actions may be *taboo,* and are to be avoided except under proper conditions, for the god will not suffer them to be treated lightly. The Latin *sacer* is one of these terms. *Sacer esto,* "let him be dedicated," is a curse, not a blessing. Virgil's *auri sacra fames* illustrates the same sense of the word. A thing may be looked on as cursed or blessed according to the god to whom it is sacred. The Hebrew root, *q'd'sh* (familiar to us in Kadesh-barnea) is of the same family, and yields a whole series of words of like connotation. Among the Hebrews the two notions of holiness and uncleanness are in their origin practically identical. The Greek word *hagios,* which Paul here uses, is by origin of the same class, as the cognate noun *agos* reminds us. The "Holy of Holies,"

where no man but the High Priest once a year might tread, is rendered in Greek *hagia hagiôn.*

To the Greek reader, especially if he had Hebrew memories as Paul had, the words *hêgiasmenois* and *hagiois*—"sanctified" and "saints"—would be apt to suggest a number of ideas all full of religious history and suggestion. The people, so termed, were the god's own; they belonged to him and were set apart for him and for his uses; they were sealed, as it were, by him and for him, and protected by all the sanctity of their god. And, it should be added, they shared that sanctity and might communicate it.

All depends on the god and on his character; and here the history of the word will help the student. When the writer known as Peter bids his friends to be *"holy* in all conduct of life along the lines of the *holy* one who called you" (I Peter 1:15), and cites Leviticus 11:44 as his warrant, "Ye shall be holy, because I am holy," he introduces a great qualification. For the *taboo* words in themselves have no moral suggestion whatever. In Hebrew, the root *q'd'sh* gives us *qâdosh* = holy; *qedesh* = holy place; *qedesheh*=harlot; and unless we know something about temples of Southern India today, or of ancient Corinth or Comana, the association of ideas is impossible. But in the ancient Semitic world, as in Hinduism today, there was nothing odd about it; the woman was a "consecrated woman," a "holy woman"; the particular god or goddess to whom she was dedicated was to be served in this way. "I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid," is a beautiful saying of a Hebrew psalmist (Psalm 116:16); but in Tamil today, "son of a servant of god" is the grossest of insults, for the "servant of god" is a temple harlot (*devadasi*), and no one would wish to be her son. It is the character of the god that is decisive of the nature of his service.

So Paul's word, with Peter's commentary, may give us a new conception of the Christian life. The Christian belongs to Jesus Christ—is *taboo* to him—is his; and the character of Jesus Christ is decisive for the nature of the Christian's service. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, *holy*, acceptable to God," writes Paul to the Romans (12:1); and to the Corinthians he varies the phrase: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys (or spoils or corrupts) the temple of God, that man shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy—which you are" (1 Cor. 3:16). Here, then, we have sacrifice and temple; and the priesthood of the ordinary Christian comes in the Apocalypse—the full series of dedication-words all linking men to Jesus Christ, and involving his way of life, not "according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world," but "according to Christ" (Col. 2:8). The writings of Paul are full of this twofold suggestion of belonging to Christ and having a new life in him (Eph. 4:22, 24; Rom. 8:2, 10, 14).

It is worth while to look a little more closely at this New Testament idea of the Christian being the property of his God, and at what *hagios* implies in this case. "You are Christ's, and Christ is God's"—what does Christ do with his property, with what is dedicated to him? The first answer is that he keeps it and protects it; and here *taboo* helps us again. In the book entitled *In Old New Zealand*, the author tells a curious story of the power of *taboo*. A chief's food is *taboo*—even what he leaves of it when his meal is over and he goes away. A case occurred where, on some expedition, a slave found food and ate it, and then was told it was the chief's. In a few hours he was dead of terror—not afraid of the chief's vengeance, but of the inherent awfulness of the food he had eaten. In Isaiah 65:5 the bystanders are

warned not to come near certain pagan rites, lest they should be "sanctified." So in Ezekiel 44:19 the danger is mentioned of being "sanctified" by "holy" garments. Men believed that something of the god passed into what was *holy* to him and protected itself. While we put this down to superstition, we may use the illustration. God, the Apostle tells us, puts something of himself into and upon his own, and keeps them safe. "It is God," writes Paul, "who has also sealed us for himself" (II Cor. 1:22). "You have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). In an ancient household, where locks were clumsy and few, everything that the master wished to be kept safe from the slaves was sealed up.[a] In the Apocalypse we read how the servants of our God are sealed on the brow (7:3), and with the name of the Lamb and of his Father (14:1). Thus the Christians are marked out as God's own—"a *holy* nation, a people for his own possession" (I Peter 2:9).

Throughout the New Testament the thought is emphasized that God will keep his own. We need only think of the ancient use of names in magic, to realize what is the value of "the name above every name"—especially when we bear it on our own brows. But the protection of God goes far beyond the sphere of magic. God always means for the Christian the loving Father of Jesus Christ; and God, "for the great love wherewith he loved us," saves from sin and keeps the Christian *holy* in Jesus' sense of the word—"you who are kept (guarded or garrisoned) in the power of God" (I Peter 1:5). He "is able to stablish you" (Rom. 16:25), and to "keep you from stumbling" (Jude 24). There is the further promise of keeping in martyrdom; for martyrdom was never far

[a] The signet-ring and its device are discussed by Clement of Alexandria; for Christians with property must have rings, and of what character should the devices be? A dove, suggested Clement, or a ship sailing, not the face of a heathen god.

away from the early Christian—"ye have not yet resisted unto blood," says the writer to the Hebrews (12:4), with the thought in his mind that that stage is quite likely to be reached. "I also will keep thee from the hour of trial," says the Apocalypse (3:10). Nor is it only in the martyr's death that he is to be kept. For God, it is implied, will keep his own as long as he loves them; if he chose them "before the foundation of the world," how long will he wish to keep them afterwards? Will he tire of them at death? Paul did not think so—"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). Immortality and resurrection are bound up with the consecrated life. If a man is *hagios,* he is Christ's for ever. "Who shall separate us?"

Returning to the idea of the service of the god to whom man or woman is consecrated, we find this also bound up with the conception of the Christian *hagios.* "If a man purify himself, he shall be a vessel unto honor, *sanctified* (*hêgiasmenon*), meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:22). The Christian is "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Eph. 2:10). The *hagios* in the temple was a servant, engaged in work for the god. So the Christian *hagios* is not merely kept as a curiosity laid by, or a fine edition of some rare book, a thing precious but not very useful; he is for Christ's use—not a folio, but a pocket edition, in and out of the pocket and rubbing up against everything in the pocket, stained, scarred, worn, and showing every sign of close identification with the owner. Just as such a book is the intimate thing, and makes the relic of a friend, penciled and corrected in his own hand, thumbed and personal to the last, so Paul conceives of the Christian being identified with Jesus Christ in his work, used to the uttermost and bound up with that service by every tie of love and redemption.

To sum up, we find surely a richer and stronger connotation for an abused word—a whole series of deep and beautiful meanings. The *saint* is just an ordinary person, limited, apt to stumble, fallible, foolish—"nothing" (I Cor. 1:28)—but he is dedicated to Jesus Christ, sealed with his name, kept in his power, identified with him in the common life that is implied by sympathetic and intelligent surrender to his purpose, and (most wonderful of all) found available by Jesus Christ and used by him in his work of redemption. And we have to remember that the word was deliberately used, to describe the experience of the men who used it. Thus it too lights up the Lordship of Jesus.

III

Slavery and sanctity are not sources from which we draw our metaphors today, but the language of the New Testament writers, when once we study it, is very clear. They gave to Jesus a place of authority; if we are to do so, we must do it as spontaneously and of our experience.

What then is the authority of Jesus? First let us look at his intellectual authority. Nothing is omitted in his survey. Especially we must note the significance of his use of human facts—that the crowning thing to prove his authority is the good news for the miserable. When the accident of the opening book in the synagogue put into his hand the passage of Isaiah, the beautiful words about the healing of the brokenhearted and the good news for the poor moved Jesus in a way that men remembered. Jesus always grasped the fact that matters; there is proportion in all his teaching and all his thinking—that in itself is the stamp of genius in any region of thought. The modern Jew loves to point out that nearly everything Jesus said was said by the Rabbis; it is in the Talmud.

"Yes," said the German scholar Wellhausen, "and how much else is in the Talmud?" It is all there, good and bad and trifling; but there is not that indiscriminate heaping together of things, relevant and irrelevant, in the words of Jesus. If the Stoics said some things that he also said, how much they omitted! When we study the books which Shakespeare read and the plays which he wrote from them, the striking thing, again and again, is what he omitted; and what genius omits is sometimes as important as what genius puts in. What Jesus omits counts as well as what he says. How much the great teachers of the world omit that Jesus keeps! How little does their teaching group itself round the real center, as his thoughts always do!

In the next place there is his moral authority. The moral insight of Jesus, his sure touch, is one of the things that constitute his Lordship. As we have seen, the eventual standard by which men judge their own lives and the lives of others is his life. But the center of morals, he has taught us to see, is love; and there is his authority—in the great loving heart of Jesus. The authority of parents and friends is just this, that nobody cares so much for us, no one does so much for us, no one sees so much in us. Who ever saw so much in men as Jesus, cared for them more, or did more for them? "We love him," says the famous disciple, "because he first loved us." There was no question as to his Lordship among those who really knew him. Above all, his sense of God gave him a right to speak. He is the great expert in life—

"The master light of all our seeing—"

the inspirer of right living, the master of consolation, who "brought life and immortality to light," who "abolished death" and gave peace. So the Church has always

judged of him. Ancient times saw men and women die for him in great numbers. In 1900 the Boxers repeated in China the great scenes that Decius and Diocletian had enacted in the Roman Empire, and thousands of Chinese sealed with their lives their faith that Jesus is Lord.

CHAPTER XI

THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS

I

Rendel Harris, in his biography of Frank Crossley, tells a story of Crossley as a magistrate in the police court at Manchester. Those were the days when English hooligans and English Justices of the Peace thought that the Salvation Army was a mistake; and they were prosecuting a Salvation Army sister for obstructing the traffic. Rendel Harris says it was a particular "broad way" that she was trying to obstruct, not in their jurisdiction. When it came to this case, Crossley left the bench and stood in the dock with the girl until her trial was finished. How electric that movement must have been! Out of this bench ranged against her—and the stolid respectability of the middle classes is never more impossible than at that elevation—steps the brightest and most charming figure and associates himself with her, in her business of obstructing a certain broad way, yes! and in the suffering and shame which she had to undergo for Christ. Paul draws a closely similar picture out of his own experience. Nero was already in almost complete possession of his record for cruelty and infamy; and Paul, the aged, was brought alone before him. By accident many of his friends were not there, and some of them were away by design. Paul had to face "the lion" alone. But he grows conscious that he is not alone. Someone is there—and none better; and the rest of the proceedings, what are they? A sacrament and a revelation; and it was worth it.

It is significant that the Church began with the most ordinary, and the most delightful, of human experiences. Jesus chose twelve "that they might be with him." The Gospel thus starts with friendship, and the Church is founded in friendship. Jesus was with these men, and they with him, on the basis of friendship, of the give-and-take that always exists between friends. Think of the common life, the rough and the hard together, and Jesus, the splendid, sympathetic, and intelligent friend all the way through. We have glimpses of their casual talk, of the freedom with which they speak to him—another characteristic of real friendship. They are not on their guard against him or against themselves, as they lie under the trees with him and talk on the mountain side; it was all so casual and natural. The thoughts of Jesus, in Charles Lamb's phrase, slid into their minds when they were imagining no such thing, in a most beautiful and natural way. They unconsciously came to share his sanity and his habit of peace; and his repeated "Courage!" (*θάρσει*) became their own mood. He had a genius for friendship; and it gave him the power of winning the love and the passion of men of different types, of capturing their imagination and enlisting them to follow out his ideas. This can hardly be overemphasized. Think of the names he has for his friends. He calls them "children" or "boys." As I have been told not to overemphasize this, it is pleasant to find that Clement of Alexandria seventeen centuries ago noticed the diminutives and found a special point in these friendly names.[1]

But, historically, the death upon the cross stamped Jesus as the friend of men. "The Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," has been the predominant conception of Jesus from Paul's day onward. The Latin poet of the Middle Ages, whose verse Dr. Johnson could

[1] Clem. Alex., *Paedagogos*, I, 5, 12-14.

not read without tears,[2] puts the same thought in music:

> *"Quaerens me sedisti lassus,*
> *Redemisti crucem passus;*
> *Tantus labor non sit casus!"*

"Worthy is the Lamb, for he was slain." His death and passion, realized in conjunction with his personal interest in men as individuals, with the sense that no solitary unit of humanity lies outside his heart—these have won men for Jesus and have given the motive principle of Christian life, sheer abandoment of self in gratitude to Jesus.

Here, as elsewhere, we have to interpret Jesus in the experience of men by the Jesus of history. If Jesus is "the same yesterday and today and for ever," if that statement has any real meaning at all, it suggests that he has still the same aptitude for real friendship—that he may have his own friendly names for his friends of a later day than the Boanerges and the Rock and the Zealot—and that he may even yet enjoy the human sympathy that can share little things as well as big, the quaint as well as the sorrowful, the gay as well as the tragic. The story in the gospels suggests a great willingness in Jesus to share life with his friend. If Justin Martyr was right in saying that Jesus made yokes in his shop—and a carpenter certainly seems the natural person to make them—we may surmise that, when Jesus invites a man to be his yoke-fellow, he knows what he means. We are told that the ancient yoke was made for a pair of oxen. Can friendship go further than to ask another out of sheer intimacy to share one's work, especially when it is difficult? It is not everybody that a man would ask to share his cabin in a long and dangerous voyage, or his work in a difficult *milieu* in a tropical climate.

[2] Mrs. Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the late Dr. Samuel Johnson*, p. 200.

II

St. Paul's letters are not treatises of theology; not one of them is a synopsis of Christian doctrine; they are occasional writings; and the frequent recurrence of a thought is a sign that it is a fundamental idea with him. He is peculiarly apt to use verbs and nouns compounded with the Greek preposition, which means "with" (συν). They are rather difficult sometimes to translate into English; fellow-worker, fellow-prisoner, fellow-servant, fellow-traveler—these are some of the nouns he uses for his friends,[8] and they are easy enough to render; but for Jesus he has a very similar series of verbs which are beyond translation without paraphrase. "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20); "becoming conformed with his death" (Phil. 3:10); "we were buried with Christ" (Rom. 6:4); "God made us alive with Christ" (Eph. 2:5); "if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Christ" (Rom. 6:8); and then, in a great burst, in one verse of the Romans (8:17), "Fellow-heirs, if we suffer with him, we shall be glorified with him."

Taken together, they are a brilliant commentary on that other striking phrase of Paul's (Phil. 3:10), "That I may know him and the fellowship of his sufferings." Jesus Christ had to face the cross and death, to go through all sorts of humiliations and sufferings, and Paul avows that his great ambition is to be in it with him. The war gave us many illustrations of that spirit. It is the spirit which is associated with the word incarnation, the spirit which made it impossible for God to keep out of the mess and trouble that we call life. Jesus came into the thick of it and bore the cross, that accumulation of shame and anguish and rejection; and Paul says: "I have to be in it with him, in the fellowship of his suffering."

[8] It is a curious thing that he never uses the actual word "friend."

That idea haunts him, as can be seen from its frequency in this small group of epistles. He speaks of the sufferings of Christ welling over upon himself (II Cor. 1:5). He does not want to stand out. Reading the account that Paul wrote to the Corinthians of what he went through—shipwreck, stoning, perils of robbers, and so forth, a modern critic has said that, as a mere feat of physical endurance, Paul's career was a wonder. In another place Paul expresses the feeling that, if anything were wanting in the shame and suffering that Christ bore, he would like to bear just that; so that, between them, he and his partner, his Lord and Saviour, might bear the full tale of human suffering (Col. 1:24). That is an ambition that reaches out beyond the range of some of us, a picture of friendship more intense than some of us know; yet we find it again and again in the Church. There are people, who are ready, who are wishful, to endure the very worst for Christ, to help him, to be with him. I asked a man in the far south of India what he got out of his missionary life. He hesitated, and then he said something like this: "A sense of nearness to the Master." At the heart of the Gospel is the assurance that Jesus is a person to whom men can get very near; they always could, he is so ready, so easy; he has such a knowledge of men, and such sympathy with men.

III

The Fourth Gospel often crystallizes in a phrase of beauty the actual words of Jesus given by its predecessors. "I have called you friends," says Jesus; and then the evangelist, again summing up the whole story, represents him as saying, "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). The essence of friendship is thus represented as fellowship in ideals and sympathy in thought. To share his mind, to

enter into his thoughts, is a part of that friendship with Jesus to which men are called. It is not a real friendship that will not go over the whole of the ground with the friend. Paul puts before us the whole gamut of suffering, through which Christ went, as an ideal experience for the Christian; and that is hard enough. In this Fourth Gospel there is the other ideal, which in some ways is even harder—the spiritual discipline of sounding all the thoughts of Jesus to the very depths. We are called on to share to the utmost his full experience of God, to grasp with him the mind of God, to live with him in the love of God—as he understood all these things. It is a call to us to be at once great souls, great hearts, great minds. Meanwhile we are very like the rest of the world, common people, commonplace through and through. What then? Abraham Lincoln once said: "The Lord likes common people best; that is why he made so many of them." Nobody believed that common people could be great, capable of great life and great death and great thought, till Jesus called them to all this, and they "heard him gladly," common people as they were. It is what he makes of his friends that convinces the world that he is in touch with the real.

Jesus calls on his friends to share his interest in men and women, and he has the gift of communicating his capacity of being interested in the most ordinary. When he promises to make his followers "fishers of men," some of them think at once of whale fisheries. But an episode like that, when he saw the crowds as sheep without a shepherd, as a harvest ready to be reaped, and asked his disciples to pray the Lord of the Harvest to send laborers into his harvest, points to more commonplace tasks, to duties which stir the imagination less and call for more of purpose. "For us," said John Robinson of Leyden, "to ask anything at the hands of the Lord, which withal we

do not offer ourselves ready instruments to effect and to bring to pass, is to tempt God's power and to abuse his goodness." Friendship with Jesus has to carry a man to the point of feeling with Thomas in the Fourth Gospel, that, if the whole enterprise is a failure, he will "go and die with him"; and it involves less tragic ministries. The friends of Jesus have been equal to both.

It is significant how few names we know in the first century of the Church, apart from the personal friends whom Paul mentions in his letters. Legend is busy with the Apostles, sending Thomas to Malabar,[4] Mark to Alexandria,[5] and so forth. History knows less. The Syrian Church was a very great one, and we have a few pages each from Ignatius and from Tatian—pages full of character.[6] We know that Tatian made a Syriac harmony of the gospels in the second century; and we have its outlines in Arabic. Sooner or later Syrian Christendom reached Malabar, and Sian-Fu in West China, where the famous tablet remains to commemorate it. Within the last ten or fifteen years fresh evidence of unknown activities of that Church appeared from the deserts of Turkestan in the form of a bilingual New Testament. A few leaves of Galatians survived, the Syriac version on one side and an entirely unknown language written in Syriac character on the other. Who were the missionaries of the

---

[4] It is not proved, though it is possible, that the Christians of St. Thomas, the "Syrians" of India, go back to the first century. Certainly the so-called cross of St. Thomas on the Mount outside Madras does not prove it. But there is nothing inherently impossible in the story that Thomas went to India. For ancient traffic with Malabar, see H. G. Rawlinson's interesting book, *Intercourse between India and the Western World to the Fall of Rome* (1916) and its references to Strabo c. 118 (on the trade about the Christian era and the 120 merchantmen sailing from Myos Hormos) and Pliny *N.H.* 6:26 (on the discovery of the monsoon and its nature about A.D. 45).

[5] Eusebius, *Church History*, II, 16.

[6] The romantic tale of the letters exchanged by King Abgar of Edessa and Jesus, and the gnostic *Hymn of the Soul* are the brightest pages in early Syrian Christian literature, to which might be added the strange *Acts of Thomas*.

Syrian Church?[7] Alexandria made immense contributions to Christian thought, but who took the Gospel there? To sail to Malabar or go overland to China might be romantic enough—till one arrived; Alexandria was only in the way of the most ordinary trade. Christians went, and their Friend went with them; they could not help telling his story; and nameless common men working for Christ among men as lowly and nameless as themselves laid the foundations on which rose one of the greatest schools of Christendom. "I look upon all the world as my parish," said John Wesley[8] in a sentence memorable in the history of English Christianity; so did these unknown men look on the world, remembering a recorded saying of their Friend, and not supposing they were doing anything remarkable.

Others again went westward. Who were the Roman Christians, who, on the receipt of the news of Paul's coming, tramped forty miles south to Apii Forum to meet him? Were they old friends from Greece and Asia, whose names, perhaps, are in Romans 16? or were they strangers? Who preached Christ to Flavius Clemens and Flavia, cousins of the Emperor Domitian—Flavia the first woman to suffer for Christ, whose name we know?[9] When Tertullian in A.D. 197 writes: "We are but of yesterday, and we have filled everything, cities, islands, camp, palace, forums . . . all we have left you is the temples," when he says that even in Britain there are Christians and beyond the borders of the Roman Empire, he points to the results of Christian life and preaching and martyrdom, but he does not know the names of the men and women. Nor do we in general know the names of those

[7] Von Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, 2:140, points out that the Syrians were a nation of traders who traveled the world. Syrian pedlars are not unknown in America yet.

[8] *Journal* (Everyman edition), I, p. 201.

[9] See E. G. Hardy, *Studies in Roman History* (first series), p. 67; Suetonius, *Domitian*, 15; Eusebius *Church History*, III, 18.

who have revolutionized the thought of India in the nineteenth century.

The Christian Church has been made by utterly obscure people—by nasty slaves and washerwomen, said Celsus, who take women and children into corners of verandahs and whisper "Only believe!" to them[10]—yes! by slaves, said the Christian apologist, who were burnt alive for it and in the flames, "torn and bleeding," shouted, "We worship God through Christ."[11] Jesus has certainly had the gift of filling the hearts of his friends with a transfiguring passion, of communicating to them the instincts and the power that made his own nature.

The means used have been summed by von Harnack as "infinite love in ordinary intercourse." Paul sets out his methods, in writing to the Corinthians (I Cor. 9:16 ff.), and reduces them to a sentence: "I am made all things to all men" and "this I do," he adds, "for the gospel's sake." There are all varieties of human temperament, and the Christian is called to show an infinite variety. The parable of the Talents conveys the duty of ingenuity and alertness of seizing the opportunity when it comes and of going to meet it.

Wesley tells of an experiment he once made. It was suggested by someone who believed in calls, that he should not speak of Christ to anyone unless he was conscious of a call to speak to that person. So he rode from London to York, played fair by the experiment, and when he reached York, realized he had not been conscious of any call at all and had said no word of Christ to anyone. He writes this down in his Journal, and his conclusion that it is all a device of the devil. There comes a man, is his thought; whether I "feel like" speaking to him or not, the call is no matter of feeling, it is the outcome of intellectual grip

[10] Celsus *ap.* Origen, *c. Cels,* III, 55.
[11] Tertullian, *Apology,* 21.

of the two facts, that he needs Christ and Christ needs him. So the Wesleyan society came into being, and the Christian Church grew by no other magic. The friends of Jesus had got his mind, and knew what to do. "He that hath the word of Jesus," said Ignatius of Antioch, "can understand his silence."[12]

"How did Christianity rise and spread among men?" asks Carlyle; "It arose in the mystic deeps of man's soul; and was spread by the 'preaching of the word,' by simple, altogether natural and individual efforts; and flew, like hallowed fire, from heart to heart, till all were purified and illuminated by it."[13]

The personal relation was the heart of it all. "The Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me"; "Christ sent me . . . to preach the gospel"; "To me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

IV

One point, further, on which the testimony of Christians agree, is the adequacy of Jesus as friend. He understood the individual, and had leisure for him; he prayed for his followers in detail. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the writer picks out Jesus' gifts of sympathy and intelligence; the verb "He is able" rings through it as one of the great keynotes, introducing point after point. Tempted himself "he is able to help the tempted." "He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses"; "able to understand those who are ignorant and who wander," and then, in the great passage a little later: "He is able to save to the uttermost." That is the great Christian experience; it is written all through the story of the

[12] Ignatius, *Ephes.*, 15.
[13] Carlyle in *Signs of the Times.*

Christian Church. "Christ in very deed," said Luther, "is a lover of those which are in trouble and anguish, in sin and death, and such a lover as gave himself for us."

Here are a few lines from Livingstone's diary. "That hymn," he says, "of St. Bernard on the name of Christ, it pleases me so; it rings in my ears as I wander in the wide, wide wilderness." That was not a metaphor. He was tramping, a solitary white man with savages and heathen, through untracked Africa, a lonely, sick pioneer. He writes down in his diary in Latin four verses of that *Jesu dulcis memoria,* which about that time Edward Caswall translated into the familiar words:—

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest."

And he goes on to the verse:—

"But what to those who find? Ah! this
Nor tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know."[14]

Sed quid invenientibus? That is the thing that makes heroes. A little later he writes (July 5, 1848) how he preached to those savage followers. He had none around him but heathen, and he speaks of the awfulness of the living with them, in the atmosphere of savagery and superstition, of murder and impurity. He says: "I like to dwell on the love of the great Mediator, for it always warms my heart, and I know that the gospel is the power of God." What a theme to preach to savages! He could not help it, it was the subject which drew him; he must

[14] Blaikie, *Life of Livingstone,* ch. IV, p. 54; the date appears to be between 1843 and 1847. Caswell published his version in 1849, and Ray Palmer his in 1858. See Julian, *Dict. of Hymnology,* p. 588.

speak about it, and he did. He deeply impressed them. Sir Harry Johnston, in his *Livingstone*, says he knows the talk of black men in camp, the scandal and the slander that they know or invent, but never about Livingstone.[15] It was a right instinct that led Livingstone to speak of the love of the great Mediator, and these men saw it in his life and checked their tongues. Again, in a still later passage, he is in a place of difficulty and great danger. There was a strong probability that, if he took a certain road openly, as he was going to, he would be killed. He was used to danger, but this time he wavered as to his course. Then he wrote in his diary (January 14, 1856): "I read that Jesus came and said: 'All power is given unto me, and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' It is the word of a gentleman of the most sacred and strictest honor, and there is an end on 't. I will not cross furtively by night as I intended."

Once again let us look at the Fourth Gospel. "My peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you." (If Jesus did not say that in so many words, does it not sum up what he *did* say? "Fear not, little flock"; "I am with you"; "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?") If the Fourth Gospel was written later than the others, then behind the words, as they are crystallized, there is the added experience of the Christian Church. "My peace I give unto you." They have had it; they have it still. Jesus has proved true, and that is why those words can be written in that Fourth Gospel. So much for the ordinary life of the tempted, of those in danger and in trouble. Jesus, they find, is a friend indeed; in his pain, in his cross, there is peace and comfort for his followers. "Fear not! I have overcome the universe." "Consolation in Christ," is one of Paul's great phrases. But the troubles of this life are not all.

[15] P. 365.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" asks Paul, with his mind on another tribunal than that of Nero. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Jesus stood beside him when he had to face Nero; and Paul knows, deep in his heart, that when he stands before the great white throne there will be One at his side who will put strength into him there, One to make intercession for him, who is making it now—a beautiful thought which we find also in Hebrews and in the Epistle of John: "He ever liveth to make intercession for us"; "We have an advocate with the Father." Paul asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" and he surveys first the things that may meet us in this world, the things that he has met—tribulation, distress, persecution, anguish, peril, and sword; and he dismisses them with a sweep; "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Then he launches out into the other world, that world of darkness and daemons. "I am persuaded," he says, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[10]

The hymn book is a great record of Christian experience, a library of human documents, a selection from the confessions of men and women of all ages. The New Song has indeed been sung, and the love of Jesus, and his sufficiency, has been the keynote. It has not been that all these people sought him out; again and again, they have not wanted him; but by and by he comes into their lives, and what a difference he makes! St. Augustine

[10] Cf. Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Dogma*, p. 260: "The evidence of joy . . . who has rendered like Paul?"

says about his little boy that, before he came, nobody wanted him; but when he was born they could not help loving him, and they called him "God-given," Adeodatus.[17] That is the experience of men with Jesus Christ; they did not want him, they could do without him; but he comes into their lives, without waiting to be asked, and they find, in spite of themselves, that he, too, is God-given, a Friend they cannot do without. There is no Christian experience so universal as this, or so individual.

[17] Augustine, *Confessions*, IV, 2. *Ubi proles etiam contra votum nas citur; quamvis jam nata cogat se diligi.*

1. Jesus' capacity for Friendship -
2. Essence of the friendship - sharing
his ideals & the test of friendship
3. Adequacy of Jesus as a friend
4. Inseparableness of the Friend
from his friends ----- Learn
His own physically, He sends
the Holy Spirit to them

CHAPTER XII

THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

I

It was Nero, the Christians always said, who started their persecution, and a famous chapter of Tacitus confirms them; and in the reign of Domitian (81-96) it began again, and perhaps on a wider scale. The Government was going to stamp out in blood a pestilent sect too long tolerated, but everywhere hated because of its crimes —a sect, too, that retaliated hatred for hatred and was the enemy of mankind. So men said.

There was something absurd in this little Jewish sect aspiring to conquer the world. Its origin was too well known. Fifty or sixty years before, its founder had been crucified; the verb had no pathos then, only shame. Its doctrines were folly. Strange religions had made their way from the East, and gotten a foothold in Greece and Italy, especially in Rome where everything gathered that was shameful among mankind;[1] but most of these religions were old, and if they told tales as impossible as the Christians, the tales had the glamor of antiquity. One could believe that something might have happened long ago when the world was young, and far away in countries so distant and so romantic as to be half fairy land, which one would never accept if reported yesterday from a Roman province. But massed against this new superstition were all the religions of all the lands, faiths hoary

[1] Tacitus, *Annals*, 15:44.

with time. Three thousand years ago, said the most charming of living Greek writers, Delphi had been the shrine of Apollo; and the place had not lost its glory of three thousand years. In Egypt were gods older still, as classical Greece had admitted, gods old as time and more powerful than time, now capturing more and more of civilized mankind. In Persia, too, men worshipped Mithras the sun-god, oldest of gods, and he also was coming Westward, conquering and to conquer. All these religions were united, none would exclude the other, and all were against the new superstition. Nor did they only rest on ancient legend; mystic ceremony would reveal the gods in person to the worshipper. "Gods of the world above, gods of the world below, into their presence I came; I worshipped there in their sight," writes the wittiest of Latins.[2] In oracle and gift of healing they proved their power. And a squalid Galilaean peasant was to overcome them, a man nailed to a cross! It was not commonsense. Even the folly and vulgarity of these degenerate days would never sink so low. No impression could be made on the old immemorial religion, supported as it was by tradition, by the Government, by philosophy. For the philosophers, with their mouths full of Plato and Socrates, of Zeno and Cleanthes, admitted the existence of the gods, conceded them to a world unequal to conceiving of monotheism. The finer religious spirits were all against the Galilaeans; the artistic temperament, the pious mind, mysticism and imagination, found in legend and cult and mystery what the Jewish peasants could neither give nor understand. All was against them, the better elements unanimous, the vulgar openly hostile, and now the Government took action and soon the bad little episode would be a thing of the past.

[2] Apuleius of Madaura, *Golden Ass*, bk. 11, perhaps the fullest certainly the vividest account of mystery religion, by an adept.

The struggling and contemptible little Church had lost its founders, all its best leaders. Peter and Paul had perished in Nero's reign, a quarter of a century ago; and the rest of the Apostles cannot long have survived them. A race of *epigoni,* whose names a later age of the Church let die, had succeeded. The first glow of faith was growing dull and dim. The Church of Corinth, quarrelsome as ever, became a scandal; and the best in these decades that the Church could do is the epistle of Clement of Rome.[3] It was a critical moment for the Church, and the arch-enemy knew his hour and launched the persecution.

Then from an island of exile an obscure Christian, who tells us his name was John, and who may be presumed from his local interests and local knowledge to have come from western Asia Minor, sends his friends a book—a book of odds and ends and ectasies and bad grammar.[4] It was a book in a bad style—perhaps the worst style in that age of degenerate literature[5]—and full of the old apocalyptic effects, white horses, times, beasts, dragons, thunder and lightning and judgment, with Ezekiel's twenty-seventh chapter rewritten, and little epistles to the Asian churches, and, to be fair, some very moving passages of a more original sort. No educated Greek would have cared to read it through; but perhaps that was not the writer's object—"*un*fit audience let me find though few." There was still a public for apocalyptic, who enjoyed cloudy symbolism and confused pictures; and his book would certainly appeal to them. But it had, if one studied it closely, certain definite characteristics;

---

[3] His Epistle to the Corinthians may be dated about A.D. 95.

[4] Very interesting criticism of the book, its authorship, its style, grammar, etc., by Dionysius of Alexandria is quoted by Eusebius, *Church History,* VII, 25. He will not allow it to be by the author of the Fourth Gospel.

[5] The simple verse of Enoch 21:1, is the best short description of all apocalyptic literature—"And I proceeded to where things were chaotic." (Dr. Charles's rendering.)

when the trumpets and vials and voices were worked through, several things of importance stood out.

The man had read ancient history, and to some purpose. He did not rewrite Ezekiel's chapter for nothing. Ezekiel had prophesied against Tyre, when Tyre was a very great place indeed; and Tyre had gone. His mind ran on Babylon, which had been an even greater state than Tyre; and Babylon was gone. And his other favorite reading had been in books written under Macedonian kings of Syria, in the days of world-empire of Greek culture; and they had gone.

"Such is the fate of Keasars and of kings!"

But history does not repeat itself without explaining itself; and it was evident that he was satisfied that he knew why all these powers were gone.

"After these things," he says, in his casual way—for with all his emphasis on times, he leaves his readers to work any symmetry and chronology they can into the book, and after eighteen centuries they are still busy with it, finding undoubted references to Armageddon and to November 11, 1918, no doubt, and much else that is interesting—"after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory; and he cried mightily with a strong voice saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!" (18:1). It is very clear that he does not mean the Babylon that Cyrus took six centuries before. He describes an enemy he knows, and grasps her spiritual menace, a power allied with all the evil of the world, with all the social wrong. Look at the things in which she trades, rich and varied as the wares of Tyre. "Cinnamon and odors and ointments and frankincense"—how far she reaches! For these things came from Arabia and Malabar. Gold and silver, pearls and ivory, fabrics and wine

and wheat—and the list ends with horror—"and slaves and souls of men" (18:13). The great whore sits with a cup in her hand, "drunken with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses of Jesus" (17:6), and says in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (18:7). And, explicitly, she is "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (17:18).

He defines the situation as no Christian writer had yet done. Paul was a Roman citizen by birth, and as Luke shows, generally got on very well with the representatives of the Roman Government; he had no quarrel with Rome, Rome stood between the world and Antichrist.[c] But that was thirty years ago. This man sees another Rome. There are no more dreams of peace; there is no peace; it is war. Hatred is in every syllable. Rome is Antichrist, the great enemy of Jesus and of God. But from ancient history he has learnt one thing; the enemies of God do not prosper, one after another they fall, Tyre, Babylon, Antiochus; and one more will fall. In ancient war defeat meant extinction and subjection; "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia . . . for he hath judged the great whore . . . and her smoke rose up for ever and ever" (19:1-3); and after that, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready (19:7).

It is a book of victory. "I looked, and lo! a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters and as the voice of a great

[c] The "withholding" force of II Thess. 2:6 (it is not certain whether the participle is masculine or neuter) is taken to be Rome (Kennedy, *St. Paul and Last Things*, p. 219). This view is held by Tertullian, about 200 A.D.; and the Persian Afrahat who wrote in Syriac in the third century.

thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sang as it were a new song before the throne . . . and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth" (14:1-3). We have no statistics of the early Church; were there so many Christians in the world itself in A.D. 90? But he sees further, "a great multitude which no man could number"; borrowing a phrase[7] he computes it at "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands"—"of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues,[8] stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," and "these are they that came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:9-14).

An exile on Patmos, he sees a despised Church, poor within and menaced from without; and he sees this spectacle of triumph. He is a dreamer. No, he is practical; his book is a challenge to the Christian Church, a call to faith, to courage, to endurance—to martyrdom. Death is very much the same wherever we meet it; but the martyr would die alone, hated by his country, insulted—furiously insulted—in the hour of death. "Here is the patience of the saints," he says, the patience of the dedicated. Set your teeth, he cries, the worst is coming, and the best; you will be put to death, but you will live and reign with Christ for ever and ever; and with you all the people you had to save and did not save, all you longed for and despaired of, will be Christ's; Alleluia; Babylon *is* fallen.

Can we imagine the amusement with which a Greek of

[7] Cf. I Enoch 40:1; they are angels or spirits merely in the old book; men and martyrs in the new. Perhaps Enoch rests on Daniel 7:10.

[8] Jewish Apocalyptic foresaw no blessed resurrection for the Gentile in the first century B.C., nor in the first century A.D.; R. H. Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 297, 300. The immense impression made on Paul by the call of the Gentiles should be noted.

culture or a Roman governor would have glanced at this motley book? Bad style and taste, confusion and repetition, he would have noted, and the perennial silly cry of the failure and the beaten, "A time will come!"

It did come.

II

The Christian Church has through the ages drawn to itself the best, the worst, and the middling among mankind. The Corinthian Church was dependent on the floating population of a seaport, with a notorious and abominable temple of Aphrodite. The average man has always been largely represented in the Church, and perhaps (as suggested in a previous chapter) has had rather more than his share in the official guidance of the Church. Every kind of crank and crotchet too has drifted into the Christian community; sometimes they drift out; often they develop a certain degree of Christian sense which neutralizes their queerness; very often the Church has to exercise whatever faculty it has of "suffering fools gladly"; now and then they make imperishable contributions to the body that barely tolerates them.

"Ye see your calling, brethren," writes Paul to Corinth (I Cor. 1:26 f.), "how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." Whether he learnt rhetoric or not at Tarsus, he is surely using one of its figures here, and saying a little less than he means; and then he swings into a glorious and famous passage telling how God uses weak things, base things, things despised, "yea! and things that are *not*, to bring to nought things that are . . . and of him are ye in Christ Jesus." His prophecy of the Christian future is more genial than John's; there is less hatred in it, but not a whit less conviction.

Elsewhere (I Cor. 6:9, 10) Paul runs over a list of disgusting vices, some reprobated, others tolerated, in the

Roman Empire, some almost extinct in Christendom but still to the fore in heathendom; and, winding up that those addicted to them shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, he wheels round upon his friends and says bluntly: "And such *were* some of you." "Once ye were darkness," he writes to others (Eph. 5:8), "but now are ye light in the Lord." The Church has little to boast about in some of its material; the miracle has been what has been made of it.

Jesus Christ drew to himself the "whiter souls," *animae candidiores*, who were looking for God in the Roman Empire, as he has since done elsewhere—men and women who hated the uncleanness and cruelty of paganism; religious temperaments who wanted God and said so; people who wandered disappointedly among the cults, who were weary of daemons and were drawn by the "monarchic" character of the Christian religion,[9] by its pure morals and the power its adherents found in it to face martyrdom. "Every man," wrote Tertullian, "who witnesses this great endurance, is struck with some misgiving and is set on fire to look into it, to find what is its cause; and when he has learnt the truth, he instantly follows it himself as well." That sounds like autobiography. The philosophic type came, too, led by motives not very different, and gave the Church Justin Martyr and probably others of the apologists.

Tertullian said that the human soul is in its true nature Christian—*anima naturaliter Christiana*, a fine piece of insight, well phrased. Some of his proofs or illustrations of his theory are a little quaint; but he was right—the more right the deeper one goes. As on the mission field today, there were souls who only wanted to hear and they would follow Christ—beautiful natures and the most winning type of convert. Other souls were

[9] Tatian, cf. p. 6.

troubled with a conflict of two natures, and were Christian with the one and earthly, sensual or devilish with the other, capable of acts of high Christian quality, capable of horrible relapse and of apostasy, but still within the influence of Christ. Human nature is incalculable, and the envoy of Christ is confronted by perpetual surprises, the bitterness of failure when success was assured, the deep and grateful joy of triumph snatched out of disaster.

For let us once more look at our records. Paul notes, along with their faults, a number of remarkable good points about the churches of his converts. They are living in a new way, or, like new converts in the heathen world today, more and more toward a new way. They have great gifts—of real prophecy, of spiritual insight, of sheer goodness. Even Corinth, a generation later, is recorded to have had an "insatiable passion for kindness."[10] They are beginning to overcome differences in race, education, and tradition—to live together in unity, to build on one Foundation, to show signs of having "learned Christ," to "shine as lights in the world." In the third century and in the fourth there were still martyrs, and great thinkers, and real saints in the Noah's Ark Church. And so it is with later centuries. The sixteenth century, if it gave a Leo X to the world, also gave a Luther, a Melanchthon, a Calvin, a Knox—men whom we hear criticized now and then without much real knowledge of what they actually were and what they achieved. The eighteenth century had the Wesleys and Law; and nearly all, to this day, of our greatest English hymns come from the eighteenth century.

The plain historical fact is that we never can tell when the Church is going to break out into new life. The wonderful thing about it is, as Paul saw, that it is in a real

[10] I Clement of Rome, *ad Cor.*, 2:2.

relation with God in Christ; and when that is the case, there is always liable to be new light and new truth breaking out of Zion, as John Robinson of Leyden saw.

III

Let us turn to the cardinal services rendered by the Christian Church to religion and to sound thinking.

First of all, then, the Church has (with fluctuations) appealed to the higher elements in man. It has always assumed in man much larger capacity for thought and ideal than its rivals have allowed; it has acted on the belief that man is made for the Gospel and the Gospel for man, and it has taught mankind to think. Wyclif was a rebel against the Church of his day, but he interpreted the nobler and more permanent conviction of Christendom, when he maintained that preaching was the best work that a priest could do, better than praying or ministering the sacraments.[11] Paul would have stood with him. "Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the word" was an old Reformation motto, which a mawkish age shortened and made commonplace.

The Church has always stood for Jesus. With whatever degree of directness or indirectness, the historical Jesus has been held up to men. The world has been familiarized with him—insufficiently, it is true, but his name and some fragments of his story are more widely known than those of any other man. The early Church translated the New Testament into Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, and in the fourth century Ulfilas did it into Gothic.[12] The sixteenth century resumed the task and did

[11] A. V. G. Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought*, p. 252.

[12] See Sir F. G. Kenyon, *Textual Criticism of N. T.*, ch. V. The intricacy of all questions relating to early versions itself suggests the wide activities of early Christians. Cf. also Von Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, II p. 145: "Syriac, which had been checked by the progress of Greek, became a civilized and literary tongue, owing to Christianity." The same has been said in later days of German and Bengali.

it into most languages of Europe; the seventeenth did it into at least one North American speech[13] and the eighteenth saw it done into Gaelic for the Highlands of Scotland, as readers of Boswell remember.[14] The nineteenth century was above all the century of Bible translation; William Carey alone translated the New Testament into eighteen languages of the East. Statistics deaden the imagination at least as often as they quicken it. But all this work of the study is evidence of the place of Jesus in the experience of men, of the conviction that he is relevant to every man. Bible translation was only half the task; a printed Bible in a Congo tongue is useless if the Congo man cannot read. So he is taught to read; and the proclamation of the historical Jesus and the education of mankind have gone on together. And song and art have had their share in both sides of the work.[15]

Further, there has been a steady emphasis on the supremacy of Jesus—again the outcome of experience; and it has worked as a factor for clear thinking in the Church. Whatever the deadening effect of tradition and convention, it makes for the development of freedom when the stress falls steadily on the clearest of all thinkers who have dealt with God. The very wrangling about creeds, lamented by a certain type of Christian not of the profoundest, has been itself a necessary stage of growth and a powerful contribution. If at times theory about Jesus has bulked larger in some minds than Jesus himself, still the whole movement of interpretation, the rise of Christology, has meant thought, and it has directed thought to Jesus, and in both ways it has helped mankind. Indeed Christianity involved it and could not have continued without it.

---

[13] John Eliot's translation of the New Testament into "the Indian language" (Massachusetts), published 1661, followed by the Bible in 1663.

[14] Boswell (ed. Birkbeck Hill) 2:27 ff.

[15] More on this in Chapters XIII and XIV.

In the next place the Church has stood for the love of God. How mankind has always felt its way toward one personal God, we have seen. Jesus carried this further, and by his teaching of the love of God, by the incarnation of it in his whole personality, he carried it flamingly in the general heart of man. Through a series of cataclysms and earthquakes that have shaken society to its foundations and made havoc of slighter faiths, the conviction of the love of God has persisted in the Church and still persists. It has never been obscure how hard it is to reconcile experience with the love of God; the Church has not had an easy task in maintaining its faith in God, but historically Jesus has been the ground of belief, the guarantee of the Unseen.

Once more, and still in the spirit of Jesus, the Church has stood for the redemption of the world, for the faith that God plays fair with man. It has believed that in the long run all the world comes to the judgment seat of Christ. In this faith, though with long periods of deadness, the Church has made it its business to share Christ with every man. The vision of the Apocalypse was never lost; with all its odd features, the Church with some hesitation canonized the book, and stuck to it.[16] A conviction of the goodness of God, of the redemption of the whole race, is a dynamic thing. It brings to a head the feeling that righteousness must mark the dealings of God with man, and gives it a joy and a certainty which have made the Christian faith a different thing from all the cults and systems of the world.

The Church has always stood for the significance of the individual; it could not well do otherwise when Christ died for him. Not to repeat what has already been said, and is to be said in the chapters that follow, but to sum up: the Church has constantly supplied the leaders in all

[16] See Moffatt, *Literature of N.T.*, p. 499.

movements for freedom and the betterment of life—the leaders, the ideals, and the impulse. If at times it has also contained the protagonists of reaction and social paralysis, they have drawn their principles and ideas from another source than Jesus, as the comparison of his historical record shows at once. At the worst, there has always been in the Church an instinct to insist on the highest standards of morality; at times with a dead sense of these being laws imposed from without, the will of an arbitrary Ruler; more profoundly, with the realization that the ethics of Jesus are the interpretation of fundamental human nature and of the purposes of the redeeming and loving God. It is true that the Church in both these matters has at times wavered and compromised, but on the reality of man's spiritual being it has never knowingly compromised; it has stood for the truth of the forgiveness of sins; it has never lowered the flag on the issue of immortality.

In short, with all its failures, confusions, and omissions, it has been the Church of Christ; and one proof of it is that the Church has achieved new forms from time to time, at incalculable cost, and been glad to do so, for the sake of making clearer the mind of its Master. Jesus was right in his comparison of the Kingdom of God with leaven. The life within has never left the Church in what it might call peace and he would call death; there have been disturbance, upheaval, division; church history is not pretty reading; the leaven keeps working. There has been a terrific dead weight of dough for it to quicken; but a little fresh warmth from the sunshine of God in the face of Christ, and the whole mass heaves together with the pulse of life; the great ideas revive and Jesus triumphs.

IV

In a splendid passage, the writer to the Hebrews (11:22 f.) describes the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the national assembly (*ecclesia*) and festival (*panêgyris*) of the first-born, registered citizens in heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Let us put it into prose.

With the generations larger and larger masses of people have been trained in the ideas of Jesus. Boys and girls have been taught to love him; and in spite of the modern inadequacy of the Sunday school, it represents a high ideal and a fairly solid achievement. Godly men and women have married and had children, who by Christian training have grown to be the salt of the earth, as Jesus foretold—workers, heroes, martyrs, covenanters, scholars, teachers, missionaries—practical saints of every kind of spiritual and intellectual power, who have made and are making the world over again. The roll of the Church is far more wonderful and interesting than that roll of Israel, which the writer to the Hebrews unfolds; the range is wider, the problems severer, the characters more various, more gracious, more spiritual; and Jesus predicted this too—the least in the Kingdom are ahead of the greatest of the prophets.

Think of the races conquered or civilized by the Church—Greece and Rome to begin; think of the salvation of Europe when our own kindred, still glorious savages, swept down on the decaying empire; think of the training of Scotland, the planting of Plymouth, the shaping of New England; think of Madagascar and the Pacific islands, and savage man made Christian in a preparatory way; think of a century's upheaval in Indian religion and Indian ideals of society; think of the martyrs in China in 1900—has the Church been, let us say, on

the whole and with all deductions to be properly made, a power in the world? and for good? Then add all it has done in art and song, from "Hail gladdening light" (φῶς ἱλαρόν) on to Dante and Milton and beyond. Has it not come reasonably near Paul's conception of a "glorious church" (Eph. 5:27)?

If the old Greek poet, Simonides, was right in saying that "the city teaches the man," is it not possible that a society like this can teach the man too? A great world-wide society of men and women, a society of friendship,[17] conscious of the redeeming love of God, inspired by the same passion for one Lord, with every variety of character and of experience and one experimental knowledge at the heart of all—has it not a value in suggesting to us facts omitted in our survey, ideas imperfectly weighed, ideals unattempted, a faith in God and man which the world has always struggled for and only achieved in Jesus? All the real criticisms made against the Church touch it where it has in some degree left the line of Jesus; they are reminders, very salutary, that "the servant is not above his lord" (John 13:16). Everyone who does nothing to meet these criticisms, to help the Church to swing right again, is in effect turning his back on history and on Christ. But our theme is Jesus in the experience of men; and I close the chapter with the submission that the experience of the Church, in her triumphs and her failures alike, points to the reality and the permanent significance of Jesus.

---

[17] *Ut sese invicem diligunt*, quoted by Tertullian, is just as true as *odium theologicum*.

CHAPTER XIII

THE HUMANIZING OF LIFE

One of the outstanding features of social progress among mankind has been the progressive development of the individual. More and more he has concentrated attention on himself, and while it has not always been pure gain to society, none the less the gain far outweighs the loss. In the region of politics the Greek first discovered the individual. The Funeral Speech of Pericles, as recorded by Thucydides, and the arguments of Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias*, show the good and the bad side of the movement. Callicles will hear nothing of law or morality being founded in nature; the individual is the real thing, and nature means

> "That they should take who have the power
> And he should keep who can."

Pericles' ideal is nobler. The individual shall be his utmost, shall be developed in every capacity and aptitude, shall enjoy all the liberty needed to this end, that, when he has carried nature's gifts to him to their highest stage, when he has become rich in imagination, insight, and character, he may consecrate all he is to the city he loves. The ideal is one which Jesus himself might have put forward, with two important modifications. Pericles does not reckon god or gods as a factor, hardly as an incident, in the story; the teaching of Jesus makes God central, the center implied in every radius and in every smallest or largest arc of the circumference. With

this change, would go another; for the city of Athens he would put something larger. "'Dear City of Cecrops!' said he of old," so Marcus Aurelius wrote in his diary (4:23), "and wilt not thou say, 'Dear City of God'?" Jesus would have said it, indeed he did say it in his own vocabulary; and when he speaks of the Kingdom of God, it is with the fullest emphasis on the Founder and Maker of his ideal city or kingdom. "City," the writer to the Hebrews calls it, a man steeped in Greek ways of thought; "Kingdom" was the Hebrew word of Jesus.

It was the boast of Athenians that Athens was the education of Greece.[1] Greece was as truly for a thousand years before Christ, and for some hundreds of years after, the education of the world, and in some degree it is so still. The great lesson was what Pericles set forth—that more might be made of man in every way, thinker, citizen, parent, poet, artist; and the Greek showed how it might be done. The barbarian and the Greek differed above all in this, that life with the Greek was better thought out, better understood, and therefore better used. About A.D. 178, Celsus, in his attack on Christianity, allowed that barbarians—people who were not Greeks, such as the Egyptians and the Persians, and in a good temper he might possibly have added the Hebrews—were able to discover religious truths (*dogmata* is his word), but "to judge them, to establish them, to develop for moral growth what the barbarians have discovered—that is a task for which the Greeks are fitter."[2] It was very much the idea of Greek Christian thinkers. The Greek did make more of life and more of man than any people of antiquity—humanized man, in fact. And if we say that Jesus carried the process further, it is well first to see, in outline at least, what the Greeks had done before him.

[1] Thucydides, II, 41, 1. [2] *Ap.* Origen, *c. Cels.*, 1:2.

I

A thousand years, perhaps, before Christ Homer drew some of the finest pictures of chivalry that the world has yet had. His imagination sees deep into human character, and the great fundamental human virtues move him. He reads the warrior's mind and shows us the hero. "Friend of my soul!" says Sarpedon, "were it that, once we two were escaped from this war, we should live for ever, ageless and immortal, neither would I fight in the forefront, nor send thee into the battle that gives glory to men. But now fates of death stand over us, ten thousand of them, that mortal man may not flee nor escape; therefore let us go; either to another we shall give renown or he to us."[3] When Andromache begs Hector to stay, not to go to the battle and leave their baby boy an orphan, "All this," he cries, "is a care to me; but I have a respect unto the Trojans and to the long-robed Trojan women."[4]

αἰδέομαι Τρῶας καὶ Τρῳάδας ἑλκεσιπέπλους.

That is Greek courage, courage with the eyes open, the risks well seen and taken; and there is another virtue there, *aidôs*, self-respect blended with the thought of others. *Aidôs* carries with it regard for suppliant and stranger, for the helpless, for the fallen foe—"Not holy is it to boast over men slain"; it is the sense that there is a god, and the greatest of all gods, who looks after the stranger within the gates, the herald from the enemy, the helpless. It does not always prevail; the Homeric hero is capable of horrible ruthlessness—"Heaven send not one of the Trojans escape sheer doom and our hands —no, not the lad whom his mother carries in her womb!"[5] But Achilles lets the aged Priam ransom his son's body;

[3] *Iliad*, XII, 322.
[4] *Iliad*, VI, 441.
[5] *Iliad*, VI, 57.

the scene is one no reader can forget. Athene enjoys the lies and cunning of Odysseus; but Achilles cries from his heart: "Hateful to me as the gates of Hades is he who hideth one thing in his heart, and speaketh another."[6] The simple great natural virtues are all in Homer.

A later day saw the rise of the intellectual virtues—of the instinct to know, to inquire, to understand, and to judge—of the courage that will face new ideas and new ignorance, that will move away from ancient moorings and explore strange seas of thought—of the feeling that thought is not luxury or amusement, but duty, man's supreme task. Here Ionia and Athens led the way.

Later still in the days after Alexander the gentler virtues rise. "Mere unmotived kindness," as Mr. Bernard Bosanquet points out, becomes a spring of action; there is a new feeling for children and women, for slaves; a new sense for beauty in flower and tree and murmuring sound.[7] Stress is laid by the Stoics on the intrinsic value of goodness, the importance of will, the inwardness of true virtue, the examination of conscience, the control of impulse, the cultivation of God's outlook.

Socrates used to say he was a "citizen of the universe (κόσμιος)." After Alexander patriotism and parochialism ran into one another; patriotism had no other meaning. The world's old divisions were gone; the new kingdoms were personal domains with no stable frontiers. Race was more than country, and race itself was of little account. Alexander had "married Europe to Asia." In one sense the universe was the only body politic left of which a man could be a citizen. A subject of Antiochus or of Ptolemy—or, later on, of Caesar—he could still boast and believe in the city of Zeus, the universe. The Stoic was glad to accept this new franchise; he knew no longer of foreigners or local laws, "man was a sacred

[6] *Iliad*, IX, 312. [7] Theocritus, *Idyll*, 1:1.

thing to man," and men and stars were ruled by one law, divine, eternal, inevitable, the law of Nature, a law that knew no outlaw, foreigner or barbarian, one for man and woman, slave and free. The conception powerfully modified Roman law in the direction of breadth and humanity.

The world's progress had been immense, but it still had a long way to go. If the Stoic counted "man a sacred thing to man," the government did not. The citizenship of the universe was amenable to Aristotle's criticism of Plato's *Republic;* relations within it were "rather watery." Those who talked most of it were men without children, a class notoriously sagacious without understanding; and when one remembers that one of their ideals was "emotionlessness" ("the savage and hard *apathy,*" Plutarch calls it), it grows clear that a great deal of life lay outside the range of the citizen of the universe. Indeed his teachers told him, as a practical measure, to keep within himself, to be limited to "the things in thine own power," *tecum habita*—to condole but not to sympathize; to reckon, if he had a child, that it would die; to realize that, if he did not love his wife's beauty, he would not be thrown into emotion and out of balance by her adultery. "Emotionlessness" was bound to work out into inhuman insensibility; it was inwardly a selfish counsel, a counsel of despair, to steel the heart to keep it from breaking, to keep it equal to work. It was, as some more human critics felt at the time, in effect an apostasy from the universe, unbelief. They preached nature and defied nature. The motive was not the highest, and no other will avail with mankind in the end.

But, as Dr. Edward Caird pointed out,[8] the Stoics missed the vital fact that man is essentially a developing being, "partly is and wholly hopes to be." There was not enough experiment about the Stoic; who can

[8] Caird, *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers,* II, 102.

master human psychology, who turns his back on woman and is not interested in children? They made great contributions to psychology, but in whole areas of the soul they had no belief. Nor did they believe so much in personality as to be able to carry it past the dissolution into atoms. For men who reject immortality, who do not believe in outcome to their own endeavors to help mankind forward even on earth, Stoicism is the highest philosophy, and a very high one; but it cuts too many questions to do more than contribute to rival creeds. Where Stoicism failed, the mystery cults were not likely to succeed.

It is the complaint of many that in the European war civilization failed, and many others hold that it had already failed in peace. But in the early centuries of our era, under the best government that the Mediterranean broadly had ever known, and in peace, civilization rested normally on atrocities that today are abnormal even in war. That it grew gentler under the Empire, is a proposition hard to maintain in view of the civil wars and religious persecutions of the third century A.D. It had reached a standstill. In four hundred years the tools show no improvement; currency and finance decline; government grows more and more bureaucratic, and apart from the Christian Church it is difficult to find new ideas anywhere.

II

"The advance of the community depends not merely on the improvement and elevation of its moral maxims, but also on the quickening of moral sensibility. The latter work has mostly been effected, when it has been effected on a large scale, by teachers of a certain singular personal quality." So wrote John Morley in 1874,[*] and it will serve as a text for the next stage of our study.

[*] *Compromise*, p. 237.

The rejection of Jesus gives the measure of his age. He had, like other leaders of men in the field of intellect and feeling, to develop the spiritual and intellectual qualities by which he should be understood. Here once more, as in the case of the knowledge of God, Jesus abolishes nothing real; he comes "not to destroy but to fulfil"; and the boundless significance of his work lay in uniting all the virtues, that the common people and the Stoics between them knew, in a new and intimate relation with religion, or rather with God, and giving them a new breadth and freedom and life. The theory on which men do kindness is one thing, the real reason another; there are people who do good by instinct and on impulse and give wrong reasons for it—a fact to be remembered when we criticize Stoic theory; but Jesus gave all virtue a new center and a new motive; act and theory jarred no more; the human spirit had a charter and an inspiration to be what God meant it to be.

The fact that he was a carpenter, a poor man, impressed men from the beginning. "He took upon him the form of slave," wrote Paul (Phil. 2:7). "The Lord ate from a cheap bowl," said Clement of Alexandria,[10] "and made his disciples lie on the ground, on the grass, and he washed their feet with a towel about him, the lowly-minded God and Lord of the universe. He did not bring a silver footbath from heaven to carry about with him. He asked the Samaritan woman to give him to drink in a vessel of clay as she drew from the well." Jesus, writes Phillips Brooks, "so poor, so radical, so full of the sense of everything just as it is in God."[11]

A fictitious Chinaman of our day speaks of him as "unlettered, untraveled, inexperienced"—a rather academic view of things. Unlettered he was not; he read

[10] Clem. Alex., *Paed.*, II, 32,
[11] *Light of the World*, p. 87.

the Old Testament in Hebrew, and other books; and he spoke Aramaic and Greek. A man with two languages, who at least reads a third, is not quite illiterate. But inexperienced—what is experience? It depends on a man's gift of seeing and feeling. Jesus himself speaks of men seeing but not seeing; more than once he notices this in men, and with an air of surprise at them. Palestine was not a backwater; it was on a trade route; and if it had been an out-of-the-way place, Burns may suggest to us what experience a man of genius may gain in a corner of life. Climate and the habits of the day drove Jesus outdoors for his education, and it was real. He knew what it was to work all day, and, on coming home, to have to face the tragedy of the lost coin, the children hungry, and the clothes past mending. A man who goes through sudden popularity, who carries a threatened life, who lives with a cross before his eyes, may be surmised to have had experience.

But it is enough to survey his interests. "Suffer little children to come unto me," is a saying hardly to be paralleled in ancient literature. How can he who has to teach mankind go "looking for something to heat the water in for the baby's bath?" is the question of Epictetus.[12] Like Dr. Johnson, Jesus loved young men, whether like Dr. Johnson he found them more virtuous than old men, or (as we did in the European war) saner. The evangelists emphasize how he spoke with women and took kindnesses from them. He was not afraid of women, nor ever warned his followers to keep away from them. He never felt family life to be a mistake or hinted that marriage was unclean; and how many religions past and present have stood for celibacy, and resented God's invention of sex? The traditional Moses seemed to imply that labor was God's curse on sin, but no such idea is to be found in the

[12] Epictetus, *Diatr.*, 3:22.

teaching of Jesus. How many of his parables show a bright interest in human energy, in the mind set to work, in the tasks of men and women? And not a hint that it is all a curse! "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" he asked. Is God's man (in other words) or your taboo of more consequence? "Is not a man better than a sheep?" (Matt. 12:12). It is hardly a hundred years since English law was with great difficulty persuaded to admit this proposition, and to leave off hanging a man for stealing a sheep. If he had lived today, Jesus might have asked still worse questions.

Jesus had none of the resentment against humanity which has at times swept over the finer spirits of our race, a mood to be read in Shakespeare himself. With his eyes open to human hatefulness, Jesus likes men and enjoys them. His quick responsiveness to the emotions of others, to the woman's wit, his pleasure in sharing the feelings of his friends, his sympathy with "the least of these, my brethren," his sensitiveness to the unsaid—all these gifts reveal not only character but faith. A genial interest in others may be born in a man, and it may degenerate in various ways; or it may be interwoven with a deeper insight, and become a great belief in man as a creation of God, embodying (one may say it) the deepest thoughts of God, a great deal of God's own nature. That this is the case with Jesus appears from his acute pleasure in bird and flower, and his relation of these things to the mind of God, and from the assurance he gives to his disciples that "*ye* are of more value than many sparrows." By a curious chance an inscription has been found, issued by an ancient food control office, fixing the maximum price for sparrows, so much for a string of ten, five for a half of that, and for a quarter of it two.[18] Jesus quotes the

[18] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 271. It belongs to the reign of Diocletian and gives prices of various foods. Sparrows were cheaper than thrushes and starlings.

prices and then sets another value, very different, upon the birds, by sweeping at once into the presence of God; and then, with the picture of God himself, interested and delighted in every individual sparrow, with the sparrow thus raised to the highest point it has ever reached, he reminds men how much more thought God has put into them, how much more interesting God finds them, how much more lovable. He brings out the significance of man by bringing him into relation with God, and it is exactly the opposite result he draws from that of civil servants and statisticians.

To the Inland Revenue Office a man has a certain tax-paying value, apart from which he seems negligible. To the census official a man is (let us say) one-forty-millionth of the United Kingdom. By similar calculation the statistician will bring out that to God a man's significance is

$$\frac{1}{1{,}500{,}000{,}000}$$

of mankind; and when he has multiplied the denominator by the (possible) millions of generations of eternity and again by the number possibly as large of conceivable other words, he makes the individual an incalculably trivial item in God's universe. Jesus alters all that by bringing in the Fatherhood of God. It would probably be impossible for even the stupidest civil servant to comfort a father in the loss of his son by pointing out that he has lost only .25 of his family, or even less, .125. The boy is not a fraction but an integer—"John" is a personality not a decimal. Jesus blots out the humiliating denominator and leaves the numerator, and by insisting that each man as a personality is an integer for God, gives a new value to all human life.

III

It has been complained that Jesus, with the horrors of slavery under his eyes, said not a word about it. Of how little use a discussion of the false economics of slavery would have been in that generation, may be guessed from the scant attention paid by our own to the warnings given us of the disastrous effects of war upon the world's economics. We were told; but we all knew better, and were wrong. In the nineteenth century the merchants of Liverpool gave a gold casket to the Prince Regent for his endeavors to maintain against Wilberforce and Clarkson and other enthusiasts that essential foundation of England's commercial prosperity, the slave trade. The experts were on one side, and on the other the "philanthropists" and "agitators"; and "most of what is decently good in our curious world," says Lord Morley, "has been done by these two much-abused sets of folk."[14] And what set them to disturb England about mere Negroes? Historically, it was the assertion by Jesus of the value of the individual Negro to God—not so much by word spoken, as by the quieter and more impressive witness of the cross. Jesus, unable to convince men in any other way, died for the Negro.

Paul, dealing with the religious ideas, valid enough, of some of his friends, brings in a final consideration: "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14:15). The very phrase chimes through the Christian centuries. When the new Roman governor of Cyrenaica about A.D. 410 began to oppress the people, the brilliant and charming Synesius wrote to him in a tone that he could not mistake; the governor was treating human beings as if they were cheap, but "man is a thing of price, for Christ died for him." The scholar Muretus

[14] *Recollections*, II, p. 172.

in 1554 said the same to the physicians who proposed to try upon him an experiment, *in anima vili*: *"Vilem animam appellas,"* came a voice from the bed, *"pro qua Christus non dedignatus est mori?"* Kett in rebellion in Norfolk said it to the court's emissary: "Call not them villeins for whom Christ died." It has been a charter of the oppressed through the ages. The mind of Jesus, exhibited by his death, stands still in marked contrast with our modern materialistic way of making much of things and property and little of men. When Mr. Bernard Shaw flippantly talked of compensating sweated labor with cheap forecasts of heaven, whatever class of people he meant to hit, he did not touch the Jesus of Nazareth and of Calvary. He at least never spoke in that vein; and, if his followers had, the great world might have credited them with more sense and less enthusiasm.

The great illustrative fact of heathenism is its cheapening of human life. The last centuries of Indian history before British rule are a commentary on this;[15] the doctrine of *Karma,* with its teaching of 8,000,000 rebirths, so said an Indian official of a Maharaja to me, is one cause for the carelessness about individual life. And India is not a land of savages, nor was the Roman Empire. Nations are remade less by treaties and Acts of Parliament and rearrangements of outward things than by deep regenerations of spirit and desire. Tyndale, the translator of our New Testament in 1526, said in what seems a very modern tone that, if the King of England did amiss, it lay in the right of the meanest to tell him he did naught. England read and revised and re-read his New Testament for a century, and told a king of England that he did naught—told him in a way intelligible to himself and to posterity. No wonder the Marquis Wellesley in 1808

[15] On this point it is better to take the evidence of contemporary and non-missionary documents than the political propaganda of a certain party today.

deprecated the circulation of the Bible in Bengali as dangerous "without the safeguard of a commentary"—an interesting explanation, one notes, of the object of a commentary. The Marquis was right; the Bible has made great upheavals in India[16] as it did in the Roman world and elsewhere. Factory Acts in England began with the evangelical Lord Shaftesbury, and have a parallel in that clause in the Code of Justinian which exempts a *mima*, who becomes Christian, from being dragged back to the theater and the life of shame.

An interesting conversation, illuminative for our present purpose, is to be found in the *Life of Henry George* (p. 438). Henry George was talking with Cardinal Manning of their common interests. "I loved the people," he said, "and that love brought me to Christ as their best friend and teacher." "And I loved Christ," said Manning, "and so learned to love the people for whom he died."

But, as Dr. Johnson wrote in Goldsmith's *Traveller*,

> "How small of all that human hearts endure
> That part which kings or laws can cause or cure!"

Life is not made by the constitution under which we live, nor by the laws that should control us. It depends far more on what the Greek calls "the unwritten laws the breaking of which brings admitted shame." The caustic English sarcasm, "worse than wicked—vulgar," hits off what Thucydides meant. How little manners matter and how much! George Whitefield, as Dr. Dale once pointed out, never dreamed of preaching about courtesy and good manners, but Jesus did preach about them—did it explicitly and much more implicitly. The "high-minded man," according to Aristotle,[17] "justly despises" others

[16] See J. N. Farquhar's fascinating book, *Modern Religious Movements in India.*

[17] *Nicomachean Ethics,* IV, 8, p. 1124b.

and is "ashamed of receiving a benefit." Jesus let women minister to him of their substance, and accepted it as natural and friendly that his disciples should row while he slept, but there is in every syllable of his teaching, in every movement of his mind, that recognition of God's interest in the meanest of men, which is the antithesis of contempt. The definition of a gentleman as one who never puts his feelings before the rights of others or his rights before their feelings, is quite in his vein. The gravamen of rudeness is its suggestion that the other man does not matter, and is uninteresting. Jesus made every man interesting by bringing out that God is interested in him. He himself found something attractive or of importance in every man; he had a genius for appreciation and he conveyed it to those who caught his mind. If eminent Christians have sometimes lacked it, it has, perhaps, been because they were too eminent to be quite Christian. Jesus, however, said plainly: "Let the greater among you be as the younger," and added, in a sentence as charming and playful as it was true: "I am among you as the serving man" (ὁ διακονῶν) (Luke 22:26, 27). Paul, in the same spirit, will have Christians "forbear one another" and "speak truth in love" (Eph. 4:2, 15); but even he, one feels, fell short of the charm that appears in Jesus' dealings with men and women. Children went to him, mothers showed him their babies, all sorts of people brought him all sorts of troubles and questions; and he was a man who could be interrupted without explosion. He has the secret of charm and he can communicate it, though how is another question, but it is to those who believe in him through and through. Any defect of belief in Jesus shows itself somewhere in unbelief in God or disbelief in man. The headmaster of one of our great schools recently wrote, in an essay on education, that "it is hard to take even the shortest railway journey and keep

true to the Sermon on the Mount." Perhaps Jesus would not have pushed people off a tram-platform, which would seem to indicate that his standards of the relative importance of things were different in some way from ours, and that our life is not yet humanized beyond his ideal.

Clement of Alexandria tells us of vain persons who held up the example of Jesus as a reason for rejecting marriage, which "they call mere prostitution and a practice introduced by the devil."[18] This was not mere rhetoric. To primitive thought (and there is still much of it in the world) there was something supernatural in conception, something demoniacal; some religions defied it and made a sacred ritual of the process of reproduction; some repudiated it as polluting. Clement takes another view of Nature, much more like that of Jesus. Nature made us to marry, and "the childless man falls short of the perfection of Nature."[19] Men must marry for their country's sake and for the completeness of the universe;[20] the married man exhibits "a certain distant image of the true Providence."[21] The heathen may practice abortion and expose their children and keep parrots instead, but the begetting and bringing up of children is a part of the Christian married life.[22] "Who are the two or three gathering in the name of Christ, among whom the Lord is in the midst? Does he not mean man, wife, and child by the *three*, seeing woman is made to match man by God?"[23] Tertullian said there would be something shameless about God calling us sons, if he forbade us to have sons by taking marriage from us.[24] This group of passages from two great Christian thinkers about the year A.D. 200 is significant enough, more still when we find

[18] *Stromateis*, 3:49.
[19] *Strom.*, 2:139, 5.
[20] *Strom.*, 2:140, 1.
[21] *Strom.*, 7:70, end.
[22] *Paidagogos*, 2:83, 1.
[23] *Strom.*, 3:68,1.
[24] *Adv. Marcion*, 4:17.

Paul allowing marriage "because of harlotries" (II Cor. 7:1, 2). When one realizes how deeply the ideal of celibacy had tainted the spiritual atmosphere, this conception of Christian married life grows more surprising, but it represents the real teaching of Jesus.

When men challenged Jesus upon the divorce question, and quoted Moses against him, he threw over Moses. Moses had an eye on his constituency and compromised (Mark 10:5). The real issue was the design of God in making and mating the sexes; did God mean temporary unions, shorter or longer? Today we hesitate perhaps in referring matters so abruptly to God, and try the intermediate court of Nature; and Jesus meets us there quite readily, he has no suspicion of Nature and the facts of the case are all he wants. As usual, he does not much argue the matter. He goes to the home for endless illustrations of spiritual life and he never (like Paul) draws a parable from the breakdown of marriage (Rom. 7:2). How much home meant to him appears in his tone from time to time —"the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head"—in the welcome he gives to children, in his tenderness for widows and mothers. It is not idly that the friendliest of modern poets slips into speaking of

> "Little children saying grace
> In every Christian kind of place."

It is just where one would expect them, and exactly what they would be doing.

In the Middle Ages—that curious "age of faith" when men believed furiously in Christ, fought crusades for him and burned heretics for him, but accepted neither his teaching nor his spirit as very real or serious—the Church swung altogether over to celibacy; whatever else they did, priests might not marry. "I praise marriage," said Jerome, "I praise wedlock, but because they bear

me virgins; I gather from the thorn the rose.[25] Luther brought his generation abruptly back to the ideas of Jesus, when he shocked it by marrying the ex-nun Katharine Bora.[26] The modern biologist, with his mind upon Nature and society, and less interested in church tradition, stands here with Jesus and Luther. "It was one of the greatest social services of the Reformation that it broke with the ascetic ideal so far as marriage was concerned, and ranked the married life higher than the unmarried. . . . The sterility of monks and nuns and priests for so many centuries turned the laws of heredity against the moral progress of the race."[27] But the home matters still more than the stock, and children notoriously grow up better in Christian homes than in Platonic barracks or convent orphanages—and even in quite ordinary homes, as French statesmen have found. What England owes to the children of ministers and clergy and even deacons, may be read in part in the *Dictionary of National Biography,* a work without much theological bias.

The school owes something to the Christian Church. By the second century daily reading of the Bible was inculcated, for the Church quickly realized that the Christian was called to be better educated and more intellectually alert than the heathen—to be more "human." By 1609 common education was a municipal charge in Holland, for the "Protestants of the Netherlands saw the immense importance of education to their cause, based as it was on the study of the Scriptures, and the general education of the people and the wide diffusion of printed books, especially the Bible, had much to do with the *reality* of the Dutch Reformation, and with its popular character."[28]

---

[25] Jerome, *Ep.,* 22:20.
[26] See further Ch. XIV, p. 244.
[27] W. Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis,* 167, 174.
[28] Winnifred Cockshott, *The Pilgrim Fathers,* p. 114.

The Pilgrim Fathers, who gave American life its spirit, took these Dutch ideas with them to New England; and school and college were among the first concerns of the Puritans there, as they are still in America. England is the one Protestant country that has despised education. John Knox put things on another footing in Scotland a generation before 1609. It is interesting to find that today on the Congo at least one great missionary society will not accept converts into the Church till they can read; the New Testament, i.e., the historical Jesus, is the Negro's best safeguard against superstition, his surest hope of development. And the heathen see what it means; "The God of the Catholics," the saying goes at Yakusu, "has no books." How many colleges, before and after Harvard, founded in 1636 by men "dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches," does mankind owe to Christian emphasis on the development of the mind?

The date of *The Teaching of the Apostles* has been disputed. Discovered, and printed in 1881, it came as a shock to those who were not prepared for such startling simplicity in the early Church, and some prefer to see in it a fancy sketch of some fourth century heretic. Sounder opinion confirms an earlier date; perhaps about A.D. 100 would serve. Here, then, is a short chapter from this remarkable book. "Everyone that cometh in the name of the Lord, let him be received; and then when you have tested him, you shall know, for you will have sense, right and left. If he that cometh be on a journey, help him as much as you can. But he shall not abide with you more than two or three days, if it be necessary. But if he will settle with you, if he is a craftsman, let him work and eat. If he has not a craft, according to your sense take measures that he shall not live among us idle, a Christian. If he will not do this, he is a trafficker in

Christ. Beware of such." The early Church has to translate Jesus' word, "Give to him that asketh of thee"; and realizes that the best gift a man can have given him is a trade and a chance to work at it. "You will have sense." Probably the modern could not better the suggestion to the little community.

Family life, education, trade-teaching—the Church began as it has gone on with the ideal of helping men. A "passion for doing good" marked the Corinthian Church, as we have seen; and there are various ways of doing good. To feed the hungry, is one; to put him in the way of feeding others, is a still better. The Christian was in the world to carry out the ideas of God in their full compass. Many he took from the common store of his times, some he discovered for himself; he would "have sense." He made mistakes, of course; but his love of Jesus was a steady corrective, for it kept him in touch with an emancipating spirit, and gave him an inspiration which has never died.

Stoic cosmopolitanism was eclipsed by Christian. "If then God," says Peter (Acts 11:17), "gave them the same gift, who was I to be able to prevent God?" and he justifies the universalism of the Church from its identity of experience. Jesus was interpreted aright; his thought of God as center, as God and Father of all, included all mankind.[29] The language of the cross was intelligible to all men; it had the same revelation, the same charm for all. By the end of the first century the hymns of the Apocalypse include all nations and races and languages joining in one song, a new song. That song has not grown old. In Christ there is neither barbarian, Scythian,

[29] Mr. Montefiore, in *Pharisaism and St. Paul*, p. 56, in describing Rabbinic Judaism, has a most remarkable sentence: "This indifference, dislike, contempt, particularism—this ready and not unwilling consignment of the non-believer and the non-Jew to perdition and gloom—was quite consistent with the most passionate religious faith and with the most exquisite and delicate charity."

Jew, nor Greek, as Paul said. We should put other race-names, and it would be equally true. What is more, men of every race know in their hearts that Jesus Christ is a closer bond of union than any other. Every Christian nation by now recognizes that the whole world has to be won for Christ; missions are in the program of every church; and in Christ is the hope of the world. Christian experience turns to prophecy; what he has done, he will do "according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21).

CHAPTER XIV

THE RECONCILIATION OF FREEDOM AND RELIGION

When St. Paul tells us that "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (II Cor. 3:17), he says what is against traditional etymology. Etymology may tell us what a word originally meant, and sometimes it still means the same; but more often a word makes its own meaning for itself out of the company which it keeps, and forgets all about its origin. The older etymologists, however, connected the word "religion" with the verb that meant to bind, not to loose. Indeed a great anthropologist of today, the French Jew, Salomon Reinach, has defined religion as "a collection of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties." That is a charmingly simple definition; but it is, perhaps, rather what he would wish us to think of religion, than anything else. We must remember that a definition may be a war cry or a slander, and that we have to look at the man who makes it and at his purpose as well as at the definition itself. Other thinkers take a profounder view of religion. "Man," writes Professor Gilbert Murray, "is imprisoned in the external present; and what we call a man's religion is, to a great extent, the thing that offers him a secret and permanent means of escape from that prison, a breaking of the prison walls which leaves him standing, of course, still in the present, but in a present so enlarged and enfranchised that it becomes not a prison, but a free world." Similarly, Professor Cairns writes: "Religion

is, fundamentally, on the human side, man's protest and appeal to the Supreme against the sorrows, indignities, and sins of this present world. It is the endeavor of man, through that appeal, to unite himself with the life of that unseen and ruling world, and so to win the power from it to dominate and transmute the life of time." Historically, this is the truer view. Primitive religion, when it has outlived its time, grows to be very like magic and is a limitation upon man's mind and action; but in every really living community thought and religion have always interacted on each other. How could it be otherwise? In essence the religious life is the deepest life of all; for the most fundamental thing in man is his relation of himself and of all the world to God, so that thought will be at the very heart of religion.

Yet those who say that religion and thought are antagonistic, and point to the Christian Church and to other religions for proof of what they say, have a certain case. For many men and women realize the need of religion, as they call it, but want it merely as an anodyne against the troubles of life, or as a protection against God. They want "salvation," regarding it as something definite and precise, a final settlement with God, a discharge of obligations, rather than as renewal of relations with an old friend. Many others mean to base their lives on religion, but resent the labor of thought; they prefer things fixed and done with, settled notions, and laws laid down and needing only to be carried out; they do not count thought a duty or a necessity. Men ask for a simple Gospel, "the old, old story," forgetful that the heart of "the old, old story" is only reached when it is daily a new surprise, that nothing that is real remains simple very long. Others lean to ritual on aesthetic grounds or from sentiment, and a great many through sheer force of habit; and some of them, if only there is enough symbol, are not

very anxious as to what the symbol means—a danger that seems inseparable from symbolism. But, above all, there is a class for whom truth is a static thing, something of which they feel "you know what it is and there it is," as if "the faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) were a set of propositions simple and definite, and lifeless as the multiplication table—as if "faith" were not rather an instinct to explore God, to know the heights and depths of Christ, to track out the great spiritual purpose behind all existence.

There is always disaster where thought and religion are regarded as antagonistic. It has often happened in the history of men and nations, that the religious have stood on one side and the speculative on the other, with a good deal of mutual contempt, sometimes with hatred. In England the mood is perhaps less one of hatred than of quiet contempt; "the Church," someone has said, "is thought of as feminine; the world is not as much afraid of it as of Ramsay Macdonald." Society depends on thought and movement; if it is not progressive, it declines. The Roman Empire fell because it became an ideal bureaucracy; men gave up the hope of new ideas, and even the very notion that they were desirable; they left their thinking to be done by civil servants. Freedom is the necessary condition of reaching higher stages of life and thought; and if the Church manage to get the reputation for missing this conception, men turn against it. It is not in the Christian Church alone, but in other religious communities, even in a greater degree, that men have come to believe that, with too close an investigation into religion and its basis, all confidence in it goes; that it is safe, so long as one does not touch it and does not examine it, but that to ask questions is dangerous to faith. The prevalence, real or supposed, of this fear among Christian teachers has provoked the caustic definition of faith as

"believing what you know to be untrue." We deserve that taunt when we are shy of thought. That mood is not faith; it is doubt. In some of the most religious spirits of antiquity, as of today, and in every religion, we find that inherent scepticism; and the honest, the candid, and the good say: "If that is religion, let us have none of it." We can have too much of the past, too much even of our inheritance. "If our duty to the Past is to remember, our second duty is to forget."[1] We need to forget; we need to have new experience; we have to be dissatisfied with our range in truth; we have to explore beyond it. All men who know and love truth, know that; and what can they think of a Christian Church, where that spirit is suspect?

I

When we ask the mind of Jesus upon the question, he is, as always, abundantly clear. The sentence, attributed in the Fourth Gospel (8:32) to Jesus, "The truth shall set you free," is like other sayings in that book, rather an extraordinarily vivid summary of the whole teaching and spirit of Jesus than an actual quotation. If he did not say it—well! he lived it; his eyes flashed: "The truth shall make you free." We attribute to Jesus, very unimaginatively, an omniscience, which takes much of the meaning out of his whole story. Omniscience may be an inert thing; the most omniscient people we meet have often very little mind at all. What we find in the historical Jesus is a much greater thing than omniscience; it is that freedom of mind, that activity of intellect, which we associate with all great characters who launch into the world ideas that emancipate. Jesus has an infinite capacity for interest in things and people, in the human mind and its relations to God. Interest was with him a habit;

[1] J. H. Moulton, *The Treasure of the Magi.*

it is clear that he had the gift of instinctive observation, which Wordsworth describes. He recognized the necessity of inquiry, which Nature—or, he would have said, God—implants in men. He understood the men who ask, who seek, who knock, and he promised that there will be answers to questions and opening of doors. In an extraordinary phrase, which seems to rest on other optical theories than ours, he pictured a man's "whole body full of light." Jesus, who thought in pictures and spoke in pictures, must have meant more by this than we carelessly assume as we read it; he must have had some idea in his mind. "As when the lamp with its flash lightens thee" are his words (Luke 11:36); and one thinks today of the "torches" we used in the dark nights of the war; does he mean a body like some kind of incarnated and personal X-ray, which might light everything up, till the secrets of things stood out revealed—a personality that illuminated everything?[2] More plainly, he says: "There is nothing hid that shall not be known" (Luke 8:17). "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God" (Luke 8:10)—a thought in vivid antithesis to the cults of mystery and sacrament, which traded in the unknowable and extolled trance above reason. He promises that we are to see our way at last through all the wonders of the whole wide realm of God; and it is the promise of a thinker who does not use words without feeling their meaning, who understands the appeal of God and his ways. It seems fair in view of such sayings to hold that he recognized the progressive character of truth; and this is confirmed by his many parables that turn on growth, on progress and expansion, on life enlarging itself a hundredfold. It is intelligence, after all, progressive intelligence that gives freedom, and not the

[2] Cf. John Bailey, *Johnson*, p. 120: "Johnson never, even in his religion, left his open eye or his common sense behind him; and common sense told him what a brighter light concealed from St. Francis."

acceptance of ignorance, in whatever piety it cloaks itself.

We must remember his independence, his sincerity of mind; we often miss "the immense amount of real hard thinking implied in the religious and moral teaching of Jesus."[3] He lived in a world when men were beginning more and more to look to the past (real or fictitious) for guidance in religion. All the cults had sacred books, and many hidden books. He read, but he read "as one having authority." "It was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you," is not the utterance of one in bondage to quotations or traditions (Matt. 5:35). He criticized Moses' law—"an eye for an eye" was not right; and he criticized Moses himself for compromising on a moral question and permitting what was not in God's law (Mark 10:5, with Matt. 19:8). When he used scripture, it was not as his contemporaries did, still less as Christian apologists of a century later did; he went to the heart of it, and took what he found to be true.[4] He treated religious traditions and usages in the same way; taboos about food he put aside as irrelevant to a man's real being (Mark 7:18). It is shrewdly suggested that, if he had said anything in tune with the growing fancy for asceticism, we should have heard of it. His sayings reflect his mind. He has not the flaws of contemporary style in speech; he is simple and direct; he uses "the language actually employed by men," as if he had read and accepted William Wordsworth's preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (the edition of 1800). Imagination, playfulness, and intensity give life to his words; there is no hint of artifice in them; they are all nature and truth. It is a dynamic speech that *does* things, like Luther's words, that were called "half-battles." His intolerance of even the half-false in speech is shown in his refusal of polite compli-

[3] Rashdall, *Conscience and Christ*, p. 78.
[4] Cf. Loisy, *Ev. Syn.*, 1:569: "*L'émancipation de Paul, beaucoup plus apparente, n'était pas plus réele.*"

ments; he will not have "good Master," and he will limit affirmation and denial to yes and no.

Such speech comes, and can only come, from a mind of equal sincerity. He does not use quotations, because he goes to facts—"Tell John what things ye hear and see" —and to facts which people can verify. Truth is essentially loyalty to the fact, to the actual, to the intelligible in the fact; there is no copyright in it; and while some people naively hold that such loyalty narrows range, that it binds and limits the mind, the great poets confirm the experience of Jesus that it sets free. Above all his genius is for the fact with meaning. A man, he suggests, may gain skill in weather lore by observation and reflection. Facts are not all of equal significance. Knowledge involves scale and perspective, distinction between mosquitoes and camels, between potherbs and the great cardinal virtues of faith and mercy—and intelligence, we may add by way of gloss. Truth is not merely an affair of the intellect, for it depends, as the intellect does too, on a man's whole moral being. Jesus stood for honesty, and for thought and intelligence; and so far as we are loyal to him, we shall not be in bondage to the second-hand or cramped by traditions.

On the contrary Jesus makes it clear that he came into the world to emancipate men—not to make them of one mind but of many, to launch divisions of thought. Micah's words will be fulfilled; families will be divided. He "comes to set fire to the world" (Luke 12:49), as if to start the forest fire that changes the whole aspect and character of a countryside. What a picture of himself he draws creating divisions, unsettling men, driving them this way and that, inaugurating all the friction and all the stimulus that comes when men of different minds handle truth in earnest! He saw all this, and summed up the whole story in the parable of the leaven—disturb-

Jesus, the Great Emancipator of mankind.

ance, disorders, bubbles, and broken bubbles. Some people think the Church's history is a succession of broken bubbles. Very well, but what makes them, and what breaks them? What bursts the old wine-skins? What makes the seed bear thirty-fold? Jesus believes in that fierce, strenuous, wild, discordant, adventurous creature, life. "Fear not, little flock," he says, "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). But there is more than a hint, in another saying, that you must be "violent," as the Authorized Version renders it, a man of drastic mind and forceful action, if you want to capture it and hold it. "The truth shall make you free"—dreadfully free! And when he has linked the Kingdom of God with all this upheaval, he is represented as saying to us: "My peace I give unto you," and: "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." Is he contradicting himself? That he is right is the verdict of the type that Jesus loves; it is to be the life of adventure in a new world, the life of intellectual battle and spiritual peace, and none better. It all comes from his central belief in God, God the author of life, creative, insurgent, upheaving life, and God the lover of it.

He is in vivid contrast with the world in which he found himself. The stricter Stoics of that day practically eliminated God from the world; to the vulgar they left their own religions as good enough for them, so drawing a fatal distinction between truth and religion. The adherents of the mysteries, on the other hand, would not have questions, as we saw, because questions upset faith and strike at the root of religion; they would have men stick to what they were told, hold to what they do *not* know, to what they do *not* understand, to the irrational, to the unexamined life, to dreams and visions and mystery.

What a contrast Jesus is to the Church today, with its lethargy, with its fear of new ideas, its clinging to auth-

ority and the conventional, its mistrust of argument, and of spiritual appeal! Men have learned to count many of these things as the characteristics of the Church of Christ, as if they were not essential unbelief and atheism. But all that is foreign to the historic Jesus, utterly repugnant to the very heart of him, as to every man who really believes in truth. No, the real difficulty has not been in Jesus; it has been in ourselves. We have been reluctant to take Jesus seriously; we have not believed that he means what he says, we have labelled it paradox, and dismissed it as if that settled the question. We have not been willing to believe that Jesus and truth will prevail, to believe with him that truth is a living thing that looks after itself, because it belongs to God, because it is one with God and shares his vitality. We have been afraid to believe that the Christian Gospel is a thing of God, and that it has his life and his power of giving life and transmitting it.

II

But there is another side to the story; for the Church of Jesus has been again and again the champion and the exponent of freedom of mind. Paul said: "I will sing in the spirit, but I will sing with the understanding also." Understanding was one of the marks of the early Church, and the awakening of the intellectual life. Lucian, the great satirist of the second century, has a story about a false prophet called Alexander, who ran a shrine at Abonoteichos in Asia Minor, and made a good deal of money out of it. At a certain stage in the holy rites in his temple, there was a proclamation: "Epicureans outside! Christians outside!" The god was good enough for the heathen; but the Christian was not to be taken in with a big snake with a mask tied to it; he would see the string. That is the evidence of a heathen, and the

story seems to me characteristic of the early Church; it shows the quickened mind and the new independence. Beggars and tramps and strolling prophets, as we have seen,[5] infested that Church; but *The Teaching of the Apostles* shows how soon the Christian brought sense to bear on new economic questions. "You will have sense," writes the author. The Christian martyr, again, like the passive resister and the conscientious objector of today, had the independence of mind to choose to do his own thinking and not to accept blindfold the opinions dictated by the government of the day. Christians carried that determination to think for themselves to the amphitheatre, and the leopard, to the stake where they were burned alive—not one, nor two of them, but dozens—a course which involved some clearness and independence, and they achieved it.

We may further note, when we turn to the ordinary everyday life of those first two centuries, that the Gospel spread to higher and higher levels of society. It was, partly, because the people who became Christians got into the habit of handling fact, as John Wesley's converts round Bristol left off being dirty, drunken, and stupid, when the Gospel came to them, and became clean and quick of mind and enterprising, and then found themselves well-to-do without expecting it, or, in the first instance, of seeking it. The Gospel also captured thinking people; and one of the features of the second century is that the Church has more and more of the better minds. There was more and more theology, and more and more heresy, which meant that people were thinking, if not always with the clearness of Jesus, and sometimes too much under the influence of their non-Christian training. The heathen temple was almost always a small place, as it still is, and the Christian church a large one; for the

[5] Chapter IX, p. 166; Chapter XIII, p. 229.

temple was a place at which rites were performed, the Christian church a place where people were taught, and regularly came to learn to think. That is written all through the early Church, and it is written in India today, though, of course, the early Church had neither the money nor the freedom to build.

As evidence of activity of mind and of sheer originality in the religious life, we may take the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer is a man who attempts a new experiment in religion, who does a new thing all against the world's religious experience. The synagogue had indeed tentatively led the way, as we have seen, dropping ritual for the Torah; but this man goes further. It is hard to realize today what a pioneer in thought he was, when he tried the experiment of a religion without priest, altar, sacrament, or sacrifice, without the Torah, "outside the camp," outside Israel, and gave up all except Jesus and the presence of God. The Christian was an innovator, a revolutionary in thought, in those early days, and he was generally right. One of the most striking things is how fundamentally wrong all the thinkers outside the Christian Church had been on monotheism. None of them believed that ordinary people could take in the idea of one God only, or would be content with it, if they did take it in. That was axiomatic even with the Stoic. The history of Christendom and of Islam has shown exactly the opposite, and has proved that, for a religion to live and to be passionate, it must have one God only. So far from being an idea impossible to take in, it is the idea that the common man has realized again and again; and it has been with him a driving force, a passion, and a source of power. In war, empire, and commerce, no less than in learning and thought, the monotheist has triumphed over the polytheist. It means surely that his religion has given him something real. Judaism was

monotheistic, but it was a sect; the Christian Church was universal, and its monotheism conquered the world.

One of the greatest teachers of the early Church, Clement of Alexandria, maintained the cause of Greek culture against the "simple Christian." The simple Christian insisted that faith alone is needed; "only believe," was his regular quotation. Clement has not quite our modern word; he calls them "orthodoxasts." Against these old-style believers, he defends the Christian's right to the utmost of learning that man can have. If the Law was the schoolmaster that led Israel to Christ, the schoolmaster of Greece was philosophy; and both were given by God. How can the Christian but have the right to study philosophy? Who has a better right? This freedom is the mark of the school of Jesus. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf goes so far as to say that "Christianity overcame the competing religions of the East, because it Hellenized itself more thoroughly than they did."[6] By "Hellenizing itself," he means that Christians achieved, more than the adherents of any other cults, that habit of clear thinking which is preeminently Greek. This is true; Jesus pointed that way by word and example. It is a curiously interesting indication of the affinity of clear thinkers everywhere, a reminder (not unneeded today) that Jesus was more than a Galilaean peasant at the apocalyptic point of view. The Christian Church may have come from the East; but it was less Eastern than the mystery religions. Indeed the scholar Titius holds that the Hellenized categories, to which Paul made the transition possible, express the real meaning of Jesus better than the apocalyptic forms, which he had himself to use.[7]

[6] *Gr. Lit. Gesch,* 135.

[7] I owe this to Dr. D. S. Cairns.

III

To pass on to the age of the Reformation: out of the Renaissance comes a German scholar, Martin Luther. Whatever our attitude to some present-day Germans, we must not forget our debt to Germany four centuries ago, and often since, or we shall think untruly, without balance and without perspective. What a battle there has been about the Scripture in our own day, we know very well. Luther, like other men reborn in that new age, read the Scripture with new eyes. Here are some of his conclusions. He denied the Mosaic authorship of part of the Pentateuch; he said that Job was an allegory and not history; he called the book of Jonah childish; he maintained that the book of Kings was a thousand paces ahead of Chronicles; and that the Epistle of James is an "epistle of straw"; and of the author of Ecclesiastes he said that "he has neither boots nor spurs, but rides in his socks." In his day the interpretation of Scripture was still conducted by the allegoric method; it was a matter of hunting for types and cryptic prophecies. Isaac on the altar was a type of Christ; so were the 318 servants of Abraham. Cyprian, in the third century, had laid down that wherever wine is mentioned in the Old Testament, it is a prophecy of the eucharist, and wherever water, of baptism. Luther rejects all these ingenuities as "merely ridiculous and childish fopperies; yea, it is an apish work in such sort to juggle with Holy Scripture;"[8] with which we shall agree. The man is here as modern as he can be.

He studied Greek: and a new epoch in European thought began, when he learned that the Greek word *Metanoein* means "to think again," and not, as the Latin

[8] *Table-Talk*, Ch. 59 (the 17th century translation).

said, "to do penance."[9] He studied church history; and, in the words of Principal Lindsay, he was "half exultant and half terrified at the result of his studies." The power of the Pope rested on sham history and bogus documents—on the forged Decretals and on the forged Donation of Constantine. Other scholars had led the way here; but when Luther saw that they were right, scholarship was translated into action, and into history. "Luther's speeches at Leipzig," says Dr. Lindsay, "laid the foundation of that modern historical criticism of institutions which has gone so far in our days."[10] Yes, and more; the man had entered into the freedom of Christ; he was not afraid of fact; he learnt, he thought, and he saw the relevance of the facts; and he acted with the freedom that Jesus had given him. He re-examined the question of vows and of celibacy; and then he married his Katharine, and had his little John, and he learned the beauty and delight and difficulty of family life. He loved singing and laughter, and little children; and he wrote Christmas carols, and translated the Bible. The contribution of Bible translation to freedom of thought and education we have already discussed.[11]

Luther struck, as the missionaries today are striking, a blow for freedom of mind, for the sweeping away of all superstition, by putting the Bible in the hands of common people and bringing the historical Jesus face to face with them. How directly Luther approaches the real! Men talked about visions of angels and of saints. Luther anticipated modern psychologists in suspecting such things. Luther said: "If it were in my choice, I would not wish God to appear to me or to speak to me

---

[9] Chapter V. It is an illuminating contrast that Loyola, after trying Erasmus' Greek Testament, refused to read it, because it interfered with "his devotional emotions." Cf. Froude, *Erasmus*, p. 130.

[10] T. M. Lindsay, *Reformation*, I, pp. 235, 239.

[11] Chapter XII, Chapter XIII, pp. 206, 228. See A. V. G. Allen, *Continuity of Christian Faith*, p. 275.

from heaven." No, he would "hold by His common revelation to all men in the words and works of Christ."[12] He was for no private property in revelation, no spiritual aristocracy. And further, "No man," he said, "must be coerced in spiritual matters." That is the voice of freedom. It is a pity that we do not hear more of it. The emphasis laid by the religious today on authority and tradition does not point to freedom. The claim to the right of private judgment and the great doctrines of justification by faith and the priesthood of all believers meant (and still mean) the right of the individual conscience, and its duty, to seek, to find, and to hold truth as it is enabled by God—the widest of all charters of liberty.

Behind it all is Luther's conviction of the value, the meaning and force of the crucified Jesus.[13] The Christian religion is based on fact, not fancy, nor even dogma. It begins with Jesus, working, living, suffering; and the condition of its progress is never to get far away from the pierced hands and the crown of thorns. The whole Reformation movement was an attempt to get nearer to the mind of Jesus. Monasticism, sacraments, tradition, the Church—did they bring men nearer to that mind? That was the test. Positively, the emphasis fell on God in Christ, on the individual soul, on righteousness as illuminated and given by Christ. Out of this new appeal to Jesus came a new world, a new era, a new England. Out of it, or from nowhere, will come the world we want to see. We cannot dispense with the historical Jesus yet; he is our best safeguard against wild thinking, fancy, theosophy, polytheism, superstition, as he is against rigidity, dullness, officialism, and oppression—against *Zeitgeist* in every form.

There is much cant today about the divisions of Christendom, but it is still true, as Milton said, that "under

[12] See Herrmann, *Communion of Christians with God*, pp. 187, 188.
[13] See Chapter IV; Chapter VI.

the fantastic terrors of sect and religion, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up."[14] We must unlearn some of our talk about "unhappy divisions." Divisions are only unhappy when tempers are sharp and awkward; otherwise, they may be very profitable, and very happy. The alternative may be spiritual death, as history has witnessed before now. Public opinion does not necessarily mean freedom, it may be the death of liberty, and only the spirit of Jesus can revive it.

IV

In the nineteenth century the Church had a great struggle about geology and Genesis. But there were people who saw that the Church of Christ was based on something better than Moses' knowledge of the rocks—on quite another kind of Rock. Jesus himself had condemned Moses as an opportunist for his compromise on marriage. If Moses was wrong on divorce, why should he be right about geology? Which is the worse error? After that came the higher criticism; and again there were people who saw that we rest on the living Jesus, historical and present, and who found it possible, like the earliest Christians, who had not yet a New Testament, to love and enjoy Jesus and have life in him. Think of the incalculable gain that followed, the freedom of mind won for Christian thinkers, the right to believe in a real Jesus without sacrifice of intellectual honesty. Through difficulty and pain they found a way out, and they brought us into freedom. If today we do not trouble about geology or higher criticism, and it is rather the

[14] Cf. Phillips Brooks, *Light of the World*, p. 85. In the Puritan century, "everything was probed to the bottom, all delegated authorities were questioned. . . . It never frightened the Puritan when you bade him stand still and listen to the speech of God."

problems of psychology in connection with religion that perplex us, we surely need not be afraid. Or, again, if we are told that economic science clashes with what Jesus said of economics, we shall go and see what Jesus did say; and perhaps, like the writer of *The Teaching of the Apostles*, we shall get some inkling of what he would say, if he were living in a different order of society from that of the Roman Empire. The very last thing we should find would be any insistence on his part that change was wrong. Mohammed fixed Moslem chronology irrevocably and disastrously on the basis of an erroneous astronomy, current in his day; and in that there is an illuminating contrast with the historical Jesus. Where the spirit of Jesus is, there will be liberty and with it a new spirit of joy and of freedom. We do not go into the intellectual problems of our day tied and bound, because Jesus set us free; we know whose we are and whom we serve; we know the type of mind that he loved, the type of mind that he gave; and Jesus will be for us, as for those before us, the Author of Freedom.

But surely we have to go further. The Christian life is not to be conceived as a long struggle of accommodation with the discoveries which men of science and scholarship make of God's laws in the world around us and of God's doings in the past. The follower of Jesus is called to be a pioneer himself; and it is a common experience that one great feature of the Christian life is the constant feeling that there is more beyond. There is something of the infinite in Jesus; and, as one feels with every real aspect of nature, we are never done learning. I have gained more here from the poet Wordsworth than from anybody. The poet seems a man with no very symmetrical system of the universe, and for this reason, he would tell us, that he is always being surprised by what he thought he knew. Common peo-

ple know such lots of things; he knows the waterfall, he knows the daffodil and the celandine, and knows them intimately. "Yes," he says, "and then one day the daffodil spoke a new language and said strange things, that I had never heard it say before; so then I knew that I did not know even it." That is what the poets teach us about the real; and there is the same quality in Jesus—the genius for surprising even his intimates with fresh wonder. He brings all God's infinite into our business and bosom. With him we feel that nothing real is alien, that all is human, and everything is at home with him. Christians have hesitated about thought, and not been sure of art; and, as a result, the philosopher is not always friendly to the Christian, and the artist still less; but they would have been at home with our Master. Jesus gives a "worth-while-ness" to everything. "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord," Paul says. The labor of poet, artist, and thinker is to bring truth and beauty into life, to capture the unrealized. Carlyle said that "*all* labor is an appeal from the seen to the unseen." Jesus stands for the larger life; he is come that we might range further into the unseen, into regions yet untrod—that we "might have life and have it more abundantly," or in modern speech, "more overflowing vitality." Jesus means exploration of God, the bracing of all the soul's energies and their development for that splendid task. Thought is a primary Christian duty; every Christian's duty and opportunity. How is God to be reached without thought? or Jesus to be understood?

The very existence of Jesus has been to humanity one of the greatest stimulants to thoughts; and thus one of the great factors in developing the human mind. His personality has been the most baffling problem with which men have had to wrestle; it is the key to any true intelligence of human nature. Historically, one of the

marks of the early Church was that, though it did not come from the upper ranks of society and had not the highest culture, it out-thought the ancient world all along the line. The man who tries to explain Jesus will come out of the attempt a greater man than ever he went in, if he works with any depth and seriousness. It is hard even yet to predict a date for the achievement of the task. One may study Christology, and not be much better, but the intimate knowledge of Jesus is an emancipating force, and the effect of consorting with him is to enlarge the whole nature—sympathy, intelligence, every faculty—in short to develop a man to his utmost and to transcend that utmost. The cross remains a challenge to every generation. It raises all the questions as to pain and death, it brings us face to face with the necessity of rethinking God. A man awakened to one set of interests is more apt to understand another, and there is no end to the activity of growing intelligence. The redeemed man is always ahead of what he was before, and the more fully he is remade by Jesus Christ the more he goes ahead. "Conquering and to conquer" is a true description of the Christian soldier as well as of his Leader. He gets the instinct and the inspiration for growth and progress from Jesus; and the new man and the new ideas gravitate to one another. As Dr. Dale said, "The healthier and nobler forces of the Renaissance found their natural home and received religious sanction in Protestantism"—the religion of the rediscovered Jesus.

V

One or two questions remain. There is little about art in the gospels. One might even say that there is no indication there that Jesus cared about art; though perhaps it would be truer to say that the people with whom

he worked did not. We have to remember the background of Judaism with its hereditary hostility to the paganism of Greek art. His disciples, indeed, were impressed by the Temple, which was a new one and not of the best period; and it may not have been the highest art that the artists embodied in the stones and the votive offerings which the Galilaean peasants admired. But there is a better way of approaching the matter. Let us look at the words of Jesus. Think how that man tells a story; he sees and fells, like a poet; and can we say that art is alien to him? that the creative spirit, which is the soul of art, is alien to Jesus, when he can create, as he does, in the sphere of language? when he taught mankind a new habit of language altogether? He feels deeply, and his speech is alive at once with imagination; and that comes very near the artist's temperament. Jesus is much more natural[15] in his speech than most men, simpler and deeper, and that is partly why he baffles the literalists so badly; it takes a poet to understand him.[16] The greatest English poet of the last two hundred years is Wordsworth, and he is the man who used the plainest language, who linked the most commonplace words and the most original thought, as Euripides did in Greece. Jesus has the same gift in "touching the common," till the bush in his story is aflame with God, more than in the legend of Moses, till the bird in the bush is a source of joy to God, till the flowers on the tree and on the ground beside it become an expression of God's own sense of beauty.[17] I can quite believe that the great artists, when they really see him, move past us, and find themselves at home

[15] "Art is perfect when it seems to be nature," said Longinus, ch. 22.

[16] "Not infrequently the first native contributions to a Christian literature take the form of hymns."—World's Missionary Conference, 1910, *Report*, vol. II, p. 124.

[17] A very remarkable expression in the *Wisdom of Solomon* (13,3) is worth recalling here. The writer speaks of fire, wind, swift air, circling stars, raging water, luminaries of heaven; "for the first Author of beauty created them."

with him. He, like them, goes beyond us in his intuitions of God's sense of color and form.

The function of art is the enjoyment and the interpretation of the whole of God's infinite life in its whole complex of relations. Who has interpreted God and God's real more gloriously than Jesus? Who has given men more right to enjoy God's gift of beauty, or done more to develop the faculty of joy which is the means of apprehending it? Who has given us the warrant to believe that "man's chief end is to glorify God and to *enjoy* him for ever"? Art, if it is to achieve its supreme work, in the union of form and freedom, implies the intensely individual mind at work on the facts of God; and in religion, as Jesus taught it, law and liberty in unison are the outstanding features, God and the human soul busy with each other and in harmony. Dr. Forsyth's fine book, *Christ upon Parnassus*, deals with this subject. Christianity, he says, in giving to the individual infinite value, opened a new and infinite field to art, the field of expression and characteristic, in passion, sentiment, and affection. The story of the Church is not without significance in the history of art. As men gain surer glimpses of the real in Jesus, there are new fields of art for us. The best interpreter, surely, will be the great Author of love. Love is the key to art. Goethe said about Heine, that he had many great gifts, but he failed for want of love. Jesus, on the contrary, it has been said, liberated in the world an endless force of love. In lowlier language, he had the gift of appreciation, and he communicates it. He teaches men to see the wonderful and the beautiful in others, to see and to love the beautiful in nature, and to go on so doing till all God's infinite world is their own. Is that alien to art?

A gap frequently felt in the systems of theologians is due to their failure to allow a place in religion for

humor. Have we ever fully availed ourselves of the playfulness of Jesus' speech? When he told his followers that if a man hits them on one cheek, they must turn the other, did he not know they would laugh—he, who grew up in the market-place of Nazareth? When he said that the distinction between Jew and Gentile was that the Gentile was always asking, "What shall we eat and what shall we drink?" was there no play of humor in that? When he spoke about swallowing a camel, was there no gleam of playfulness there? I do not believe that the phrase of Jesus there was just current coin. At any rate, the people of the day did not take it so, and I think they would have known their own common phrases, and would hardly have troubled to record them. They remembered his ways of speech, because in his playfulness and charm there was something individual and original. We are told that the fount of humor is a loving heart, that sees the incongruity, and smiles and sighs at the same time. John Bunyan expressed it exactly, when he said:

> "Some things are of that nature as to make
> One's fancy checkle while his heart doth ache."

Bunyan's humor had provoked criticism of his *Pilgrim*, as he tells us in a later preface:

> "And some there be who say he laughs too loud."

There are always people like that in the Church—dear, earnest, useful people, and so dull; but, when the Kingdom of Heaven comes, everybody will have sense of humor, and in every case it will be a gift from the same Giver. "A real sense of humor," wrote Rendel Harris, "breaks into flower when we have overcome the world."[18]

[18] Cf. Mr. Clutton Brock's remark that "Christianity has lost its power of laughter, because it has been merely on the defensive." "The universe," says another, "means well, when there are such exquisitely funny things in it."

And who is he that overcometh the world? It is matter-of-fact that kills art and kills humor; and it is Jesus, who gets people out of matter-of-fact, and gives the spirit of the new life, to which all these things are real and living, who gives the artist subjects and gives him freedom, gives him love and humor and happiness, sensitiveness to the questions and suggestions of Nature, and the enjoyment of God.

The great thing that Jesus has done, the center of all, has been to enlarge man's capacity for God. That is the secret of it. The ideas of little children are very limited. They are not always very ready to recognize the claims of "gutter children" or outsiders. The story of home life is the story of the growth of the child and the training of his capacity for taking the whole world into his heart; and Jesus has done that with men and women, who are harder to teach than little children. Jesus has, indeed, given the human heart the capacity for God. God is comprehended in how many ways, along the line of every faculty, and of every sensitiveness? God speaks to one man in color, to another in sound, to another in movement, to another in rhythm, to another in the beauty of children, to another in the need of the world. Jesus all through the centuries has been making the human heart larger, and more human, and more apt to get hold of God and then to want more of him. He has been, of all beings, the most intelligent of God, the most sympathetic with all God's creatures, the great interpreter, not only of God, but of everything in which God is interested, the bird on the wing, the flower in the field. Where the spirit of the Lord Jesus is, there *is* liberty.

BR 125 .G545 1921 c.2
Glover, T. R. 1869-1943.
Jesus in the experience of men

DATE DUE

Gardner-Webb Library
P.O. 836
Boiling Springs, NC 28017

DEMCO

9R2
75

Gardner-Webb University Library
0 0000 00006482 4
357-BAB-168